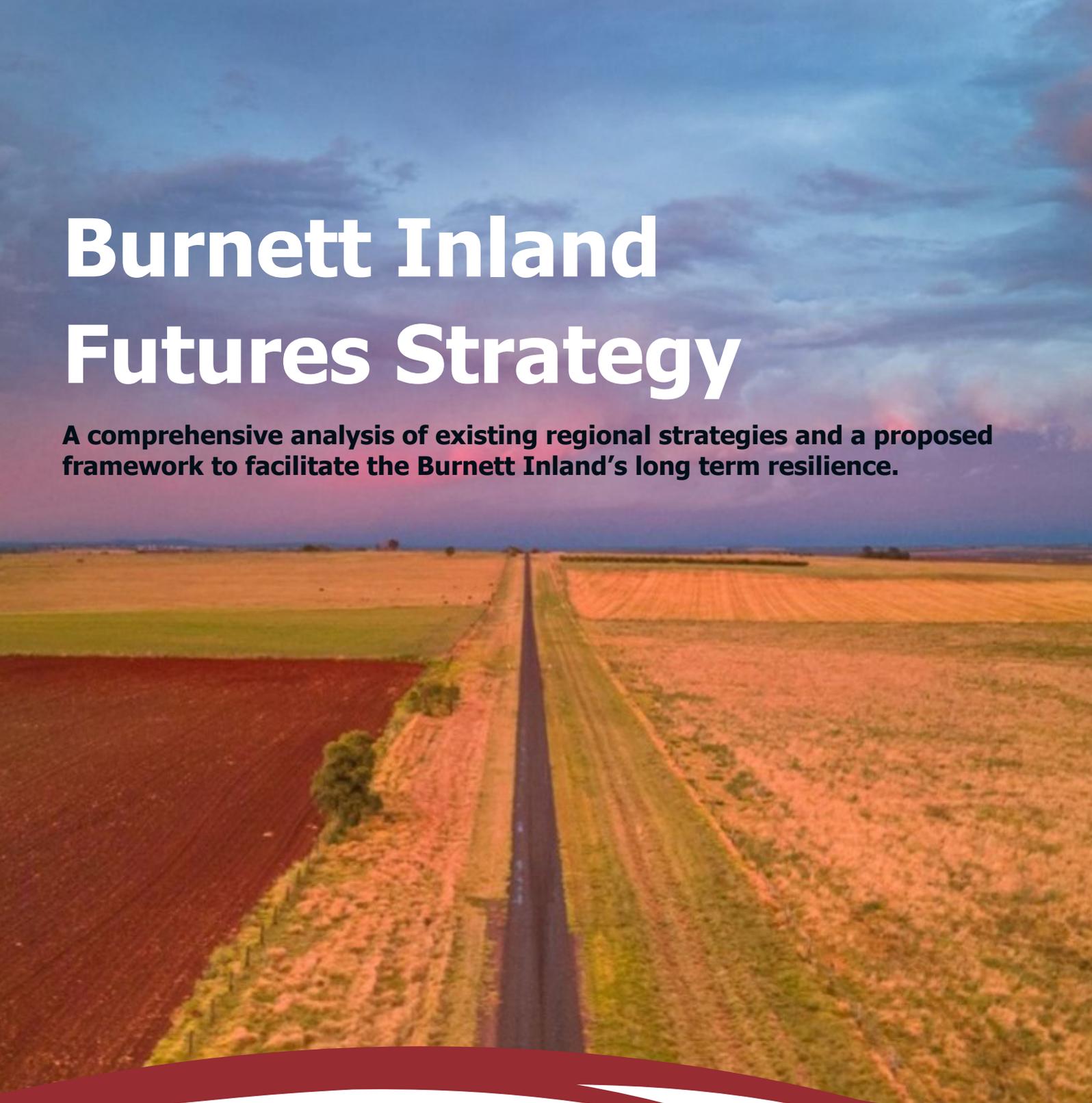


# Burnett Inland Futures Strategy

A comprehensive analysis of existing regional strategies and a proposed framework to facilitate the Burnett Inland's long term resilience.



**RED EARTH**  
Community Foundation

# Acknowledgement and Report Details

This report is made possible through a contribution from Stanwell's "South Burnett Resilience Fund" to develop Phase 1 of the Burnett Inland Futures for the Red Earth Community Foundation.

## The report followed an approach to:



**Conduct analysis of existing studies** (State, Federal, and International) and data of the region to understand current situation and any existing (April 2021) strategies and use this information to identify needs, gaps, potential future challenges and opportunities. This includes local government corporate plans currently under development. (i.e. \*not adopted until end of April 2021)



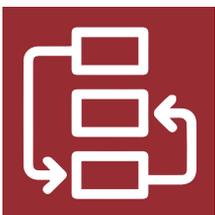
**Engage with key stakeholders**, both agencies and industries, to discuss current and future operations, challenges and opportunities alongside their vision for short, medium and long-term development.



**Develop the engagement design for Phase 2**, informed by the items above and inclusive of consultation with external specialists to ensure that the Burnett Inland's situation is appropriately contextualised i.e. in the global context and gains the benefit of external rigour specialists in recommending the community co-design engagement phase.



**Develop a plan to engage strategic partners and mentors** in preparation to commence identifying, training and upskilling community leaders and individuals in Phase 2.



**Develop the draft framework** (for review by relevant parties) to guide the process forward, including necessary actions that will achieve the overall vision identified for the future direction and development of the Burnett Inland by its people.

## Report author:

Dr. Chad Renando, Research Fellow (Innovation Ecosystems), Rural Economies Centre of Excellence, University of Southern Queensland.



# Preamble

When the Red Earth Community Foundation (Red Earth) was imagined, its founders knew there would be change ahead, but were unaware of the pace and scale of this change.

Formed just prior to the 2013 Queensland floods, Red Earth stepped up to enable the distribution of \$95,000 from the Mayor's Flood Appeal to local people, enabling them to recover from the impacts of flood damage on their lives, whilst ensuring the funds were spent with local businesses through a local voucher scheme.

Almost nine years later, with a purpose to Build a Better Burnett for Everyone, we now hold a nationally recognised annual Community Leadership Program with over 170 alumni, have delivered several community capacity building projects and are entering our next phase of growth.

Our Board Members - local people who are invested in the Burnett Inland - willingly contribute their time, treasure and talents to creating a vehicle, or in our language, "a Community Foundation" to empower the region to create and fulfill its preferred destiny.

With a strong history of innovation and resilience, the Burnett Inland has endured more than its fair share of drought, floods, natural disasters and industry changes, yet none of these have defeated us - in fact, they've driven resilience, innovation and tenacity.

The challenges that lie ahead from climate change, further disruption from technology advances and the potential exit of some of our dominant industries will also provide significant opportunities, and we know as a region that we will be stronger in 30 or 50 years time if our people are given an opportunity to co-design their preferred future.

The Burnett Inland Futures (BIF) rose out of the experience some of the South Burnett community had when they came together to oppose the loss of some of the region's most productive agricultural soil to an unsuitable mining development. Fortunately, this project did not progress, however it brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, some who wouldn't traditionally sit together, to consider how the region could urgently develop a plan that informs elected representatives, agencies, developers and others what local people's priorities and values are for today and the long term.

Red Earth Community Foundation considered how it could make available its resources and philanthropic structure to the wider region during these discussions. Following consultation with representatives from South Burnett Regional Council, AgForce, BIEDO, The Next Economy, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Stanwell and Kingaroy Concerned Citizens Group, Red Earth agreed at the end of 2019 to initiate the first step by seeking funding from Stanwell's South Burnett Resilience Fund to undertake a comprehensive analysis of existing regional strategies and propose an Action Plan to facilitate the Burnett Inland's long term economic resilience.

Red Earth is incredibly grateful for the support of the Rural Economies Centre of Excellence (RECoE), in particular, Dr Chad Renando, Dr Ben Lyons and Dr John McVeigh for their expertise, research capabilities and academic integrity in developing the first phase to guide our way forward. Their shared values of supporting rural and regional communities to thrive is acknowledged and appreciated.

Now with the support of the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal the wheels of this strategy will gain further traction. We invite you to join Red Earth Community Foundation in the exciting journey of designing a plan, so that in 10, 20, 30 or 50 years time, those following us will know where their region's strong foundation came from.

*Georgie Somerset*

**RECF Chair**





**We invite you to join Red Earth Community Foundation in the exciting journey of designing a plan, so that those following us will know where their region's strong foundation came from.**

***Georgie Somerset***



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# Executive summary

The Burnett Inland region, comprising the North Burnett Regional Council, South Burnett Regional Council, and Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council Local Government Authorities, provides a valuable contribution to Australian agriculture, the Queensland economy, the Wide Bay region, and their respective local communities. The region is unique in its geographic, demographic, and economic position relative to surrounding communities. This report examines the region in this context, with a focus on long-term strategies to enable future sustainability, resilience, and competitive growth.

## Report structure

The report is structured as follows:

1.0

**Consider the regional context, including industry and economic outputs, demographics, and innovation investment infrastructure activity.**

2.0

**Identify the 'ecosystem' of leading economic development organisations in the region, including government, peak bodies, community organisations, service providers, corporations, foundations, and education providers.**

3.0

**Highlight current strategies and narratives by relevant institutions and community leaders, including a strategy thematic analysis and identification of accountabilities and potential gaps in strategy execution and enablers and inhibitors identified by the community.**

4.0

**Outline regional transition models from literature with example case studies.**

5.0

**Present recommendations for roles involved in regional transition.**

# A new approach is needed for regions in transition

## Deliberate investment in a collaborative approach to build capacity and infrastructure for a collective outcome.

To support transition in the Burnett Inland region, there is a need to activate all the available assets.

**Like many regions across Australia, Burnett Inland is experiencing unprecedented level of sustained and diverse challenges.**

**Rapid technological advances** provide significant benefits but are not equally accessible for everyone based on proximity of networks, available information, and digital connectivity.

The increase in frequency and severity of **climate-related events** such as drought, fires, and floods have a heightened impact on regional communities.

The continued **decarbonisation of the economy** requires action from two sectors prominent in regional communities – mining and agriculture – as regional communities are relied upon to achieve state, national, and global carbon targets.

**Pervasive demographic shifts** and the hollowing out of younger populations affect adaptability to respond to change with available talent and local leadership capacity.

**These common challenges are not experienced equally across all regions**, with embedded disadvantages including a lack of availability of environmental assets, fewer liveability and lifestyle characteristics, and reduced access to critical digital, water, energy, and transport infrastructure.

These differences create systemic inequalities highlighted in the Burnett Inland relative to investment in surrounding regions. Without intentional action, this gap will continue to widen. These challenges are complex and resistant to change to the extent that they will not be addressed by any single organisation or institution.

To consider a response to this challenge in the Burnett Inland, this report considered input from multiple perspectives, including:

- **Regional data**, including established economic and community information relating to industries, regional revenue, population, and demographics;
- **Literature review** including contemporary practice and case studies in regional transition;
- **Strategy and policy** analysis to build on and align with prior engagements as well as identify gaps and opportunities;
- **Observations from mapping of existing roles**, to identify current collaborative structures and gaps and opportunities; and
- **Interviews of stakeholders** to identify perceived enabling and inhibiting factors.

# A new approach is needed for regions in transition

Roles considered in this review include government, economic development organisations, service providers, peak bodies and industry groups, corporations, education providers, and community organisations and foundations. While each role provides valuable contributions, there is a lack of central, coordinating effort towards collective impact related to economic transition.

Strategies in the region were analysed for their contribution to supporting economic diversification and transition. Over 920 strategies and initiatives were reviewed and categorised against 49 themes to consider the status, alignment, and accountability.

Four observations have been made when considering gaps and opportunities.

**First**, there is varying capability and capacity for executing on stated strategies.

**Second**, strategies require ownership by a stakeholder with sufficient scope and capacity to execute on the strategy.

**Third**, the strategies need to be aligned with the accountability of the authoring role and there must be the structural support in the community to execute on the strategies.

**Fourth**, few if any strategies consider shared regional outcomes across Burnett Inland for a horizon longer than five years.

Interviews from over 40 leaders in the region are examined to identify enabling and inhibiting contributions to community resilience. While there are enabling factors in some areas of relationship and trust, there are also a number of inhibiting factors across the social, individual, infrastructure, and institutional dimensions. The narratives highlight the culture in the community that reinforce status quo and resist change. These pervasive factors can only be addressed through collective action.

## Enabling factors

- Engage established business
- Incumbent leadership
- Personal relationship and trust
- Personal relationship with leaders
- Support for local community leaders
- Use existing assets

## Inhibiting factors

- Bureaucracy
- Dependant on the individual
- Lack of access to talent
- Lack of awareness and understanding
- Lack of capability
- Lack of capacity in ecosystem leaders
- Lack of a common challenge
- Lack of leadership and direction
- Lack of legitimacy
- Lack of perceived value
- Lack of redundancy
- Lack of service provider curation/availability/Lack of startup focus
- Lack of sustainable business model
- Low number of specialist skills
- Poor internet connectivity
- Remoteness

## Resilience

Figure 1 Enabling and inhibiting factors identified from stakeholder interviews - 2020

These inputs informed a consideration of a collective action approach to address these challenges and develop adaptive capacity in Burnett Inland.

# A new approach is needed for regions in transition

The consideration builds on principles of ecosystem building including:

1. Maintain diversity and redundancy;
2. Manage connectivity;
3. Encourage learning and experimentation;
4. Broaden participation;
5. Promote polycentric governance systems;
6. Foster understanding of complex adaptive systems; and
7. Maintain slow variables and feedback.

Change and transition takes time. The need for consistency and density is highlighted from research. A case is made from research for managing this process through external agencies outside of established public institutions. Collective impact and a backbone structure are positioned as an approach to address the challenges.

These findings culminate in recommendations considered under four options.

First, Burnett Inland can continue as **business as usual**, relying on past change processes to meet current and future needs.

Second, an option is considered to **expand an existing role** in the community to act as the collective impact backbone.

A third option is provided to **rely on external intervention** of a significant provider outside the Burnett Inland region or a significant infrastructure investment to facilitate collective action.

The fourth and recommended option is to **develop a new collaborative model**, considering a collective impact and backbone structure approach.

				<b>Preferred</b>
Option	<b>Option 1 Business as usual</b>	<b>Option 2 Expand existing role</b>	<b>Option 3 External intervention</b>	<b>Option 4 New collaborative model</b>
Description	Rely on past change processes to meet current and future needs	Existing role expands services to act as collaborative body	Significant external provider outside the region or significant infrastructure investment to facilitate collective action.	<b>Collective impact approach with a backbone structure</b>
Pros	Minimal change required Known roles providing consistent services	Leverage existing leadership functions and networks Allow for single-point, top-down leadership	Bring external capability and capacity not currently available Immediate investment injection	<b>Community-led engagement and change</b> <b>Dedicated focus on long-term whole-of region transition strategy</b>
Cons	Capacity and capability may not be in current structure and roles	Lack of legitimacy, credibility, stability, and accountability in single role	Community infrastructure may not be prepared to leverage physical or financial infrastructure Impact limited by life of investment or involvement	<b>Requires broad community buy-in</b> <b>Balance between establishing change approach and structure and achieving focus and outcomes</b>

Figure 2 Burnett Inland Futures Options Summary

# 1.0 The Region context and implications

## Past and current impacts

Common themes emerge in conversations about the future of Australian regions. **The global pandemic** has had a short-term impact on demand, highlighted supply chain dependencies, and increased workforce challenges from a loss of casual labour. **Ongoing population demographic shifts** place a focus on youth and skilled worker attraction and liveability factors including housing. Discussions about **weather-related climate impacts** such as drought and flooding turn to considerations about the **decarbonisation of the economy** and regional energy-related economic diversification.

These weighty themes are shared in policy debates around government chambers, yarns around the footy-club BBQ, and business decisions made around kitchen and boardroom tables. The past and current themes provide a backdrop to consider how Burnett Inland the future.

### Demographic shifts

The age and sex demographics of the Burnett Inland region follow a global trend observed in regional communities, that of a 'hallowing out' of early to mid-career age brackets<sup>iii</sup>. Research points to several narratives related to regional population migration. These include attraction from growth in tourism and leisure services, young people leaving regional communities to city centres for work or university to return home when older to raise their family, and attraction of retirees or older demographics looking for a 'sea change' or 'tree change'<sup>iv</sup>. The diminishing of age groups are relevant to regions in transition in that individuals from diverse age groups and experience have unique contributions to new and emerging businesses. Younger entrepreneurs are more likely to be involved in endeavours that have a social impact<sup>v</sup> and are more likely to start again after failure as compared to older, more experienced entrepreneurs<sup>vi</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been identified as having the potential to influence these demographic shifts, a trend encouraged by federal government campaigns to "Move to the regions"<sup>vii</sup> and national media programs focused on *Movin' to the Country*<sup>viii</sup>. The shift to the regions is seen as part of a change to "a new normal" supported by increased acceptance and requirements for working from home and shift towards lifestyle. The trend of working from home would support this notion, with individuals who say they work from home increasing from 20 per cent to 33 per cent over fifteen years from 2000 to 2015. However, a counter argument assumes that the influence of the pandemic is a temporary shock that is not sufficient to counter the trajectory of urban growth trends<sup>ix</sup>.

Other factors influencing geographic shifts include housing constraints of supply and affordability, amenities available in more populated city centres, proximity to employment for family members, and higher wages in city centres. A review of housing prices reflect that a regional shift may be temporary. Indications of net increases in regional populations may also reflect a temporary pandemic-influenced pause on out-migration from regional communities.

The discussion on demographic shifts is relevant to Burnett Inland in that while some regions may experience a pandemic-induced population increase, the same outcome across all regions is not expected. While the growth trajectories in capital cities remains stable, the growth dynamics in smaller and regional cities is much more dynamic and variable between regions. Regions that do benefit from population growth are likely to reflect supporting characteristics related to housing, employment, and lifestyle. These advantages need to be developed in a strategic, consistent, coordinated manner over time.

### Climate change, energy transition, and future workforce attraction

Australian regions experience tension between competing impacts of climate variability (i.e. drought) and impacts from decarbonisation of the economy (i.e. renewable energy transitions, carbon market opportunities). These tensions are difficult to navigate due to historic barriers in Australia including risks of price volatility; fossil-fuel industry resistance; historical economic reliance on high carbon-emitting industries; internal political party divisions on objectives, processes, and mechanisms for electricity decarbonisation; and differences between federal and state government policy positions<sup>x</sup>.

The barriers speak to the complexity of the challenge, as stakeholders navigate the benefits of renewable energy with unintended consequences. In 2016, the Climate Council of Australia forecast an increase of 28,000 additional jobs in Australia by 2030, with Queensland accounting for 22 per cent of those new jobs<sup>xi</sup>. According to the ABS, Australian full-time employment (FTE) in renewable energy activities increased between 2015-16 to 2018-19 by 15,370 FTE, a 33 per cent increase year-on-year, with Queensland accounting for 24 per cent of the current 26,850 jobs<sup>xii</sup>. By comparison, the Australian overall mining sector employs 267,800 persons and has increased employment by 23.7 per cent over the past five years with median weekly earnings around \$2,325 per week. Employment in regional Queensland's mining sector is expected to increase by over 10 per cent by 2025, second only to the Western Australia capital city of Perth. Employment in regional Queensland's agriculture sector is expected to grow by over 7 per cent, highest in Australia.

Employment gains are not experienced consistently in all regions and some regions may be adversely impacted by economic decarbonisation. New jobs from renewable energy projects such as solar or wind farms or hydrogen hubs provide economic benefits to local economies. Industry growth combined with the technological advances required from increased productivity requirements and the decarbonisation of the economy create a highly competitive environment for infrastructure projects and skilled workforce.

### COVID-19 impact on agriculture

The initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Australian agriculture sector was increased uncertainty across all aspects of the value chain. However, direct impacts of the pandemic on the agriculture were minimal. The majority of the impacts came from supply chain disruptions and workforce constraints due to the loss of domestic and international migration.

Early in the pandemic's impact, a report by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) April 2020 acknowledged this uncertainty but also predicted that a downturn in the sector was unlikely due to persistent food product demand<sup>i</sup>. A low Australian exchange rate increased competitiveness to offset any constraints brought about by financially constrained consumers. The uncertainty varied based on whether the product was considered essential or discretionary, the mix of domestic and export, the export markets that were serviced, and the channels to market. For example, services to supermarkets would be expected to maintain or increase in volume while product focused on cafés and restaurants would be significantly diminished due to related impacts on tourism and pandemic-related lockdowns.

A year and half following the April 2020 report, record forecasts are predicted for production gross value and export value<sup>ii</sup>. The forecast is a result of a 'remarkable' combination of beneficial seasonal conditions relative to poor growing conditions in global markets for similar sectors. These outcomes are moderated by ongoing uncertainty from the pandemic and a lack access to workforce.

While the Burnett Inland agriculture sector could be expected to share in the improved forecasts, the increase does not necessarily represent a competitive advantage for the region. On the contrary, without intentional and coordinated effort, regions on the periphery such as Burnett Inland that have lower natural access to resources and networks can be unlikely to significantly capitalise on the benefits from a rapid widespread increase compared to nearby regions with greater inherent resources. Once the contributing factors of temporary climate advantage and price benefits are removed, the predicted softening of the sector advantage can be expected to further increase the wealth gap between regions.

# Industry and economic outputs

Burnett Inland contributes 40 per cent of the Wide Bay Burnett region's total agriculture gross value – 27 per cent for North Burnett and 14 per cent for South Burnett. Livestock represents a large proportion of both North Burnett and South Burnett, with Burnett Inland contributing over a quarter of the pork sector's economic value for Queensland. Broadacre farming is prominent in South Burnett and citrus is prominent in North Burnett.

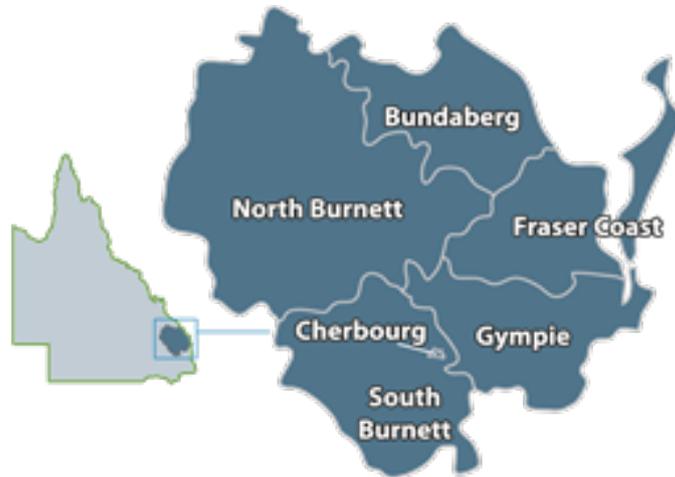


Figure 3  
Wide Bay Burnett Region  
(image from <https://www.qsec.org.au/WBB>)

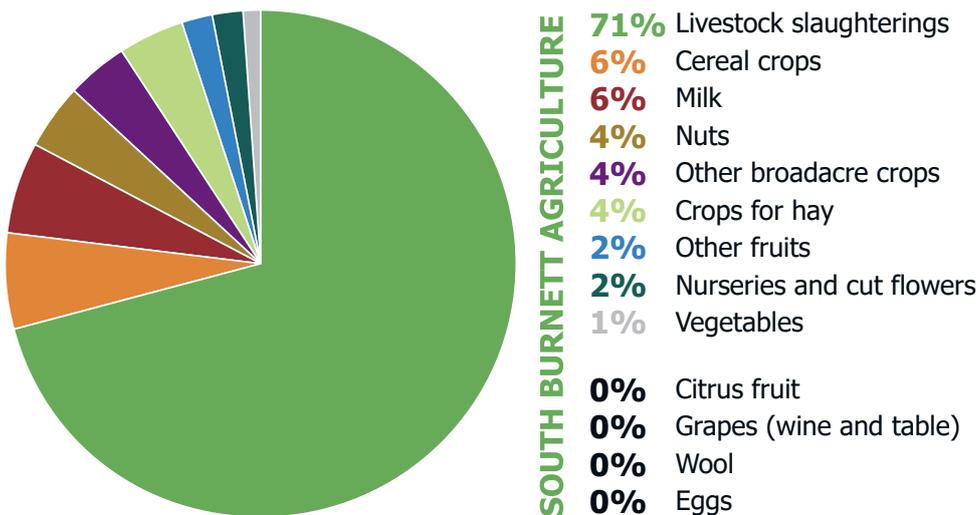


Figure 4 South Burnett Agriculture industry breakdown

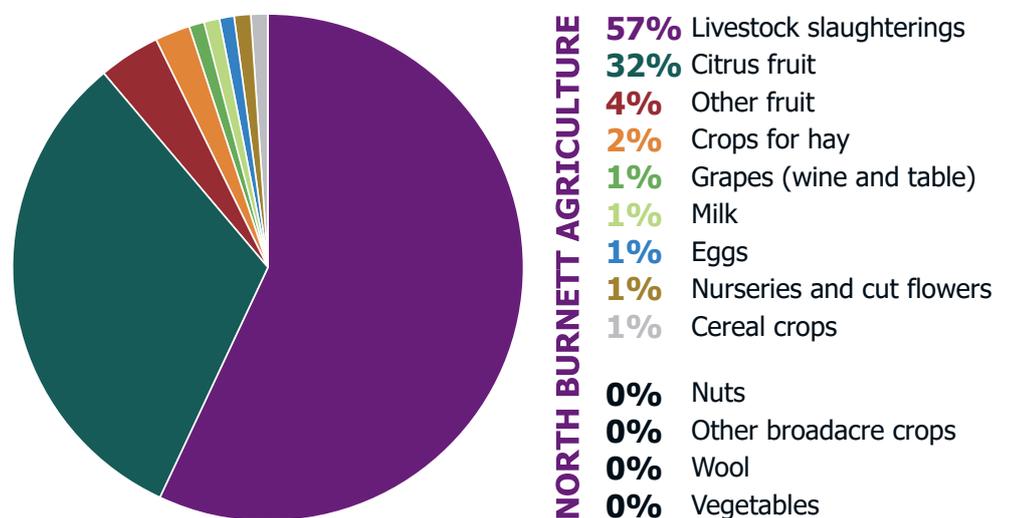


Figure 5 North Burnett Agriculture industry breakdown

## Industry and economic outputs

Burnett Inland has experienced persistent low or negative population growth relative to surrounding communities.

Five-year GRP growth has been negative to low, while North Burnett experienced a short-term increase in GRP growth in 2020.

Unemployment and COVID-19 impacts varied, as South Burnett experiences higher long-term unemployment and greater negative growth impacts from the pandemic compared to North Burnett.

	North Burnett	South Burnett	Cherbourg	Western Downs	Toowoomba	Goondiwindi	Bundaberg	Fraser Coast	Gympie
<b>GRP (\$b)</b>	\$0.68	\$1.90	\$0.30	\$4.73	\$12.19	\$0.73	\$4.28	\$4.21	\$2.20
<b>GRP 1yr change</b>	5.4%	1.3%	-3.0%	-0.2%	3.8%	-0.6%	-0.4%	0.7%	-0.4%
<b>GRP 5Yr change</b>	-4.0%	4.6%	6.0%	40.0%	21.0%	-5.3%	3.6%	4.3%	8.4%
<b>Population</b>	10,599	32,521	1,331	34,585	169,008	10,799	95,856	106,721	52,446
<b>Population change 1yr</b>	0.24%	0.09%	0.09%	0.37%	0.83%	0.69%	0.60%	1.20%	1.68%
<b>Population change 5yr</b>	0.49%	-0.26%	0.26%	2.49%	4.60%	0.01%	1.95%	5.32%	6.84%
<b>Businesses</b>	1,623	3,163	9	4,790	16,099	1,898	6,557	5,926	4,533
<b>Jobs</b>	5,038	12,758	358	20,016	85,249	5,564	36,424	34,531	18,758
<b>Unemployment 2019</b>	4.1%	11.1%	15.5%	5.0%	6.1%	2.3%	9.8%	9.8%	9.2%
<b>Unemployment 2020</b>	6.2%	7.7%	10.7%	5.5%	5.1%	4.0%	7.0%	7.0%	6.6%
<b>Unemployment 2021</b>	6.4%	10.2%	13.5%	7.2%	4.0%	4.8%	9.3%	11.4%	9.5%
<b>COVID-19 impacts</b>									
<b>GRP change</b>	11.4%	-1.4%	7.0%	0.5%	-8.5%	18.8%	-1.2%	-4.3%	-1.0%
<b>Local job change</b>	-3.1%	-4.9%	1.2%	-5.9%	-6.7%	1.8%	-4.3%	-5.4%	-4.1%
<b>Employed residence change</b>	-1.4%	-4.1%	7.4%	-1.3%	-6.0%	3.3%	-4.2%	-4.5%	-3.2%

Figure 6 Burnett Inland economic statistics

## Demographics

The age and sex demographics of the Burnett Inland region follow a global trend observed in regional communities, that of a 'hallowing out' of early to mid-career age brackets.

The prominent population in Burnett Inland is the 45 to 59 and 60 to 74 year old ages between 20 per cent to 22 per cent in each segment.

Those in the region under the age of 15 represent between 17 to 19 per cent of the population.

The 'hallowing out' is evident in population age ranges 15 to 29 and 30 to 44, each representing 15 to 16 per cent of the population.

## Age demographic changes in regional Queensland 2006 to 2016

### MALE - FEMALE

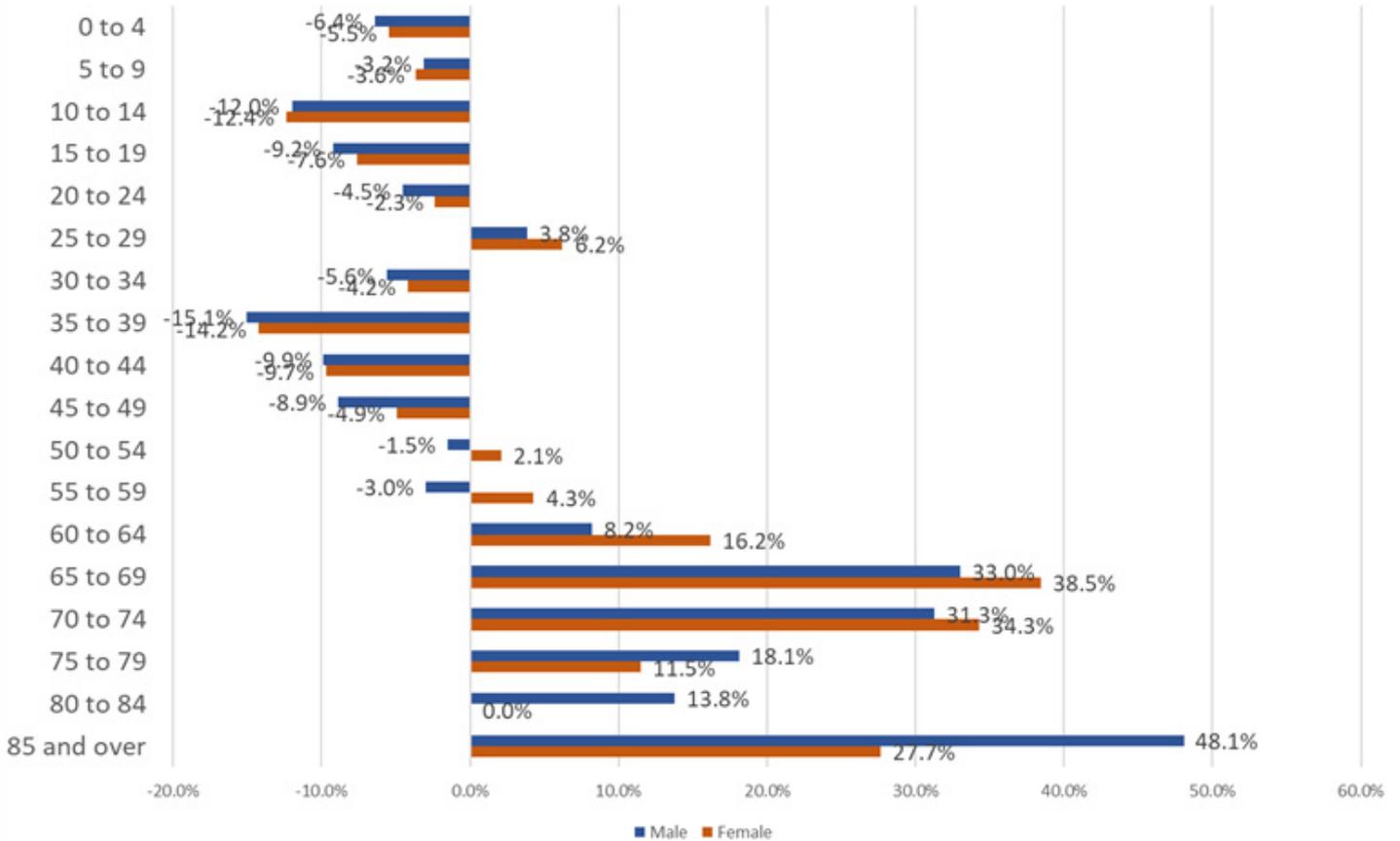


Figure 7 Age demographic changes in regional Queensland - 2006-2016

### SOUTH BURNETT - NORTH BURNETT

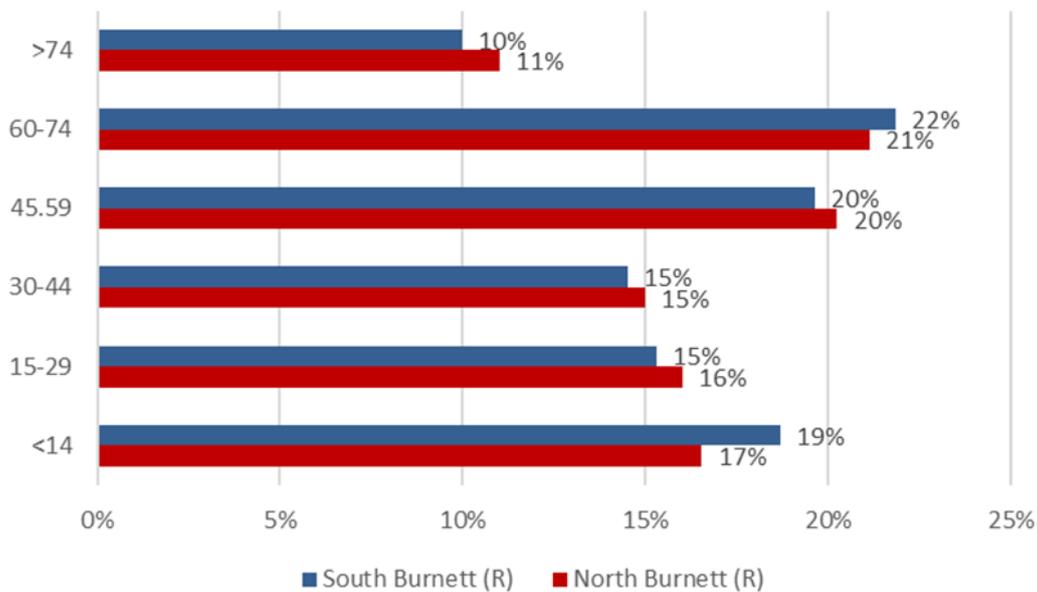


Figure 8 Age demographic changes in North Burnett and South Burnett - 2006 to 2016

# Innovation investment infrastructure activity

Burnett Inland is positioned in the middle of surrounding innovation-related infrastructure investments, including manufacturing in Rockhampton, AgTech innovation hubs in Bundaberg and Toowoomba, and drought-related activities across the six node regions of the Future Drought Innovation Hub initiative:

- The Future Drought Fund based out of Toowoomba with three established nodes in Roma, Longreach and Stanthorpe<sup>xiv</sup>.
- AgTech focused innovation centres recently established in Bundaberg<sup>xv</sup> and Toowoomba<sup>xvi</sup>.
- A manufacturing hub in Rockhampton<sup>xvii</sup>.
- A federally funded Hydrogen hub in Gladstone, with \$3 million for scoping and \$70 million for project roll out<sup>xix</sup>.
- The establishment of Queensland renewable energy zones to help Queensland reach 50% renewables by 2030, including 67 potential projects in central Queensland representing \$39 billion in investment<sup>xx</sup>.

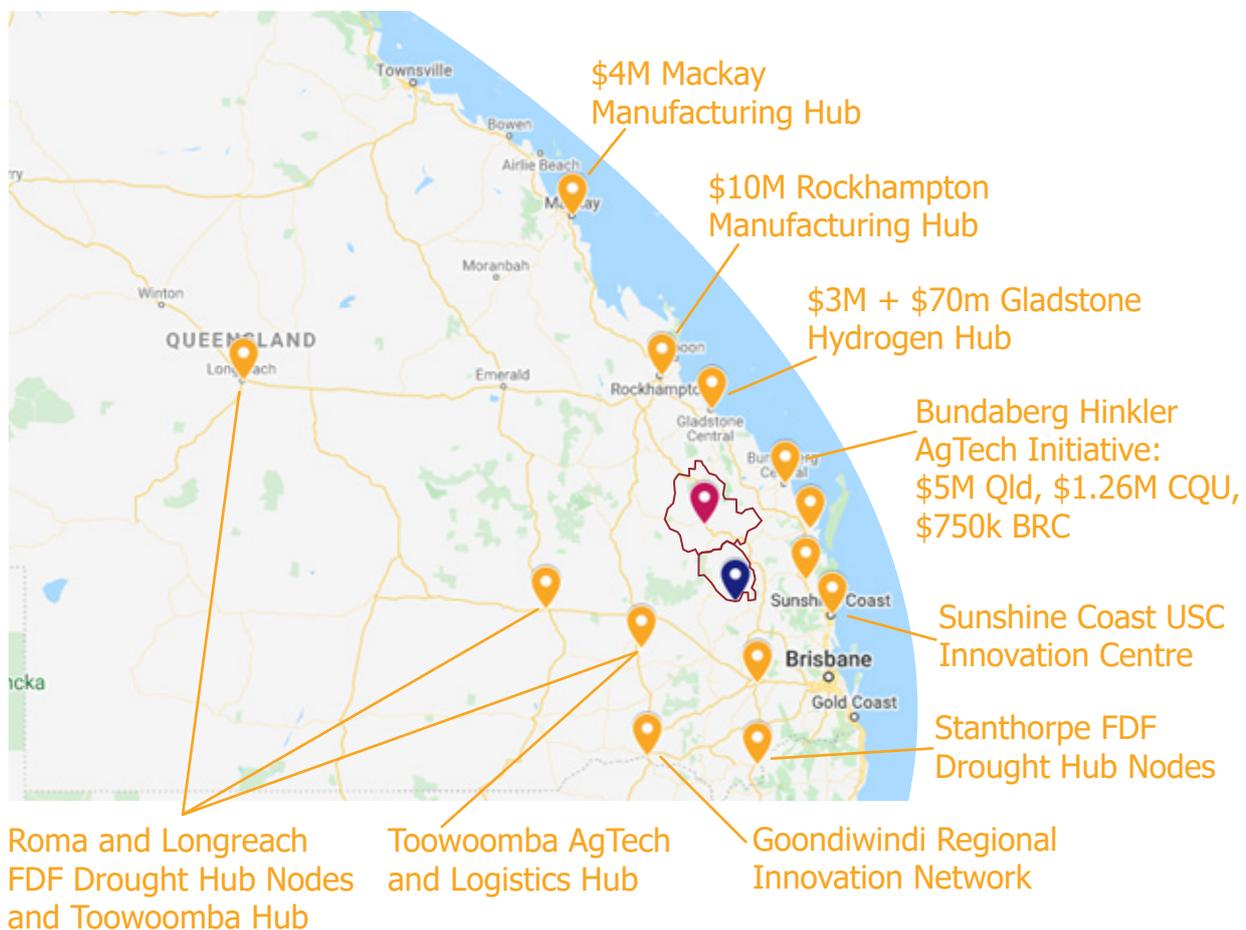


Figure 9 Indicative innovation infrastructure investment in surrounding regions

These projects highlight the natural attraction of investment and infrastructure created by population, business, and economic density. This natural flow can be mitigated in part through intentional intervention from advocacy and region-specific policy.

Regions like the Burnett Inland with relatively lower physical infrastructure inherent to geography or other natural assets risk experiencing embedded inequality and reliance on subsidised support.

# 2.0 The Burnett Inland innovation ecosystem

This section highlights organisations and individuals in the Burnett Inland supporting economic development, regional diversification, and regional transition to new economies.

These organisations collaborate for shared outcomes and compete for development resources while sharing a vested interest in the development of a future vision for the region.

The roles below were identified through desktop research and interviews and are considered from a lens of contribution to economic diversification and innovation and entrepreneur activity.

The listing below provides examples of organisations within each section and is not an exhaustive list of all the organisations supporting the Burnett Inland region.

## Examples of organisations within each section



Figure 10 Organisations in Burnett Inland that may provide support for innovation and entrepreneurship

All three levels of federal, local, and state government are active across Burnett Inland.

Government plays a role in delivering programs and grants, developing policies supportive of emerging businesses and technology development and adoption, and advocating for entrepreneur outcomes with senior political leadership support.

In regional communities, government is often one of the few roles to financially support the development of key ecosystem assets such as hubs and major infrastructure.

Government is also in a position to support activity where other roles may not be incentivised to participate, such as nascent or very early-stage entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs in communities where there is not equal access based on gender, geography, or age, or investing in significant regional infrastructure to enable entrepreneurial and economic diversification activity.

However, there are also limitations of the role of government. The nature of public funds requires a level of governance, bureaucracy, and risk aversion that can be contrary to the rapid pace of innovation-driven entrepreneurship.

Government support can be seen by applicants as 'expensive money', where the cost and effort to access the programs and grants can be seen as greater than the benefit received.

Election cycles and changing political agendas can inhibit consistency and create uncertainty to policy measures and leadership positions.

Government support for innovation and entrepreneurship can fluctuate based on the political sentiment of the time. Alignment of support between federal, state, and local government can depend on alignment of political parties and strength of local advocacy.

Distribution of funds can also depend on number of constituents and short-term programs as compared to long-term sustainability and impact.

Government is often seen as a first point of support, but government economic development positions may not attract the capability required to support fast-moving entrepreneurs.

Further, government employees in regional communities often fill multiple roles across community development and economic development. Government may not have the internal human resource capacity to support programs targeted at emerging entrepreneurs.

The role of government in the Australian innovation ecosystem is changing as the overall ecosystem evolves. Awareness and capability are increasing as the innovation ecosystem matures.

Government remains a valuable funding source for research and development and emerging businesses through grants and funding.

New collaborative approaches are developing to help government better facilitate and support rather than be the dominant actor.

**All levels of government continue to examine how best to support industry and entrepreneur-led initiatives and contribute to a culture and environment for healthy ecosystem growth.**

The descriptions of the three levels of government below include indicative policies supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, and new business development conducive to regional diversification. The examples are reflective of policies at the time of the report and would be expected to change with different government priorities. Variances between the policies in this report and what may be currently available at the time the report is published are reflective of consistency of support and clarity for end recipients accessing services.

## Federal government

### Description

The Federal government supports the overall policy framework and culture for establishing new business. This support is through grants and programs focused on entrepreneurs, startups, and innovation in established businesses, mainly through the **Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources**<sup>xxii</sup>. Grants such as the **R&D Tax incentive**<sup>xxi</sup> and **Accelerating commercialisation**<sup>xxiii</sup> provide incentives for businesses to invest in innovation activities. The **Early Stage Venture Capital Limited Partnership**<sup>xxiv</sup> program provides tax incentives for investors. The **Incubator support**<sup>xxv</sup> and **Incubator support - Expert in Residence**<sup>xxvi</sup> programs support the provision of entrepreneur support services. The **Entrepreneurs' Programme**<sup>xxvii</sup> provides local Entrepreneurs' Programme facilitators to help businesses navigate government programs and prepare businesses for accessing the programs. Other programs support innovation, diversification, and expansion in specific sectors, such as the **Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE)**<sup>xxviii</sup> from the **Department of Agriculture, Water, and Environment**<sup>xxix</sup>. Each region in Australia is also supported by local **Regional Development Australia (RDA)**<sup>xxx</sup> committees who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support economic and workforce development, local procurement, strategic regional planning and inform government programs and infrastructure investments.

### Observation

**Business Leap**<sup>xxxi</sup> provides the **Entrepreneurs' Programme Entrepreneurship Facilitator** service for North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett. The services provided by **Business Leap** include one-on-one mentoring and workshops on topics related to business basic fundamentals such as finance, sales, marketing, and business models. **BIEDO**<sup>xxxii</sup> connects innovating entrepreneurs to services such as **Business Leap** and services from other government agencies. The local **RDA Wide Bay Burnett**<sup>xxxiii</sup> is made up of committees who provide information between regions and federal government. The RDA Wide Bay Burnett Regional Roadmap 2016-2019 outlines six focus areas including economic development, infrastructure, innovation, and human capital. The Federal government is also represented by local regional managers, for example the **Regional Manager for AusIndustry**<sup>xxxv</sup> based in Bundaberg.

There may be gaps in specific support, however, for potential high-growth firms or emerging innovative projects. Entrepreneurs and businesses can be generally unaware of what federal government programs are available. Local service providers such as accountants may not be familiar with programs such as the R&D Tax incentive designed for innovating companies or how to support potential high growth firms in accessing grants. Federal government representation can be challenged to stay aware of and support local opportunities when resources are committed to the broader region.

## State government

### Description

The Queensland state government focuses on priority areas for the state through grants and programs delivered through various agencies. The primary engagement for innovation and entrepreneurship is through the **Advance Queensland**<sup>xxxvi</sup> initiative in the **Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport**<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Recent programs have included the **Female Founders Program**<sup>xxxviii</sup>, the **Life Science Queensland Catalyst program**<sup>xxxix</sup>, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused **One Business**<sup>xl</sup> and **Deadly Deals**<sup>xli</sup> programs, the **Startup OnRamp**<sup>xlii</sup> entrepreneur training and mentoring program, the **Business Development Fund**<sup>xliii</sup>, the **Business Growth Fund**<sup>xliv</sup>, the **Mental Health for Founders**<sup>xlv</sup> program, the **Regional Startup Hubs Support Program**<sup>xlviii</sup>, the annual startup conference **Qode**<sup>xlvii</sup>, and the **Regional Angel Investors Support Program**<sup>xlviii</sup>. Programs to support emerging businesses can be found in other departments as well, including the **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships' Youth Employment Program**<sup>xlix</sup> and **Enterprise Development**<sup>l</sup> program, **Trade Investment Queensland**<sup>li</sup> for international exposure opportunities, **Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**<sup>lii</sup> various industry development and support initiatives, the **Department of Employment, Small Business and Training Small Business Grants**<sup>liii</sup> and **Mentoring for Growth**<sup>liv</sup> program. In addition to these programs, the state government engages in larger innovative infrastructure opportunities such as the **Toowoomba AgTech Hub**<sup>lv</sup> and the **Cloncurry Drone Testing Facility**<sup>lvi</sup>.

### Observation

State government programs for traditional businesses are represented in North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett through local representation of various government departments including the **Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**, **Department of Employment, Small Business and Training**, and **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships**. Engagement with local business can be direct as well as through intermediaries such as peak bodies, local government, and economic

## Local government

### Description

Local governments advocate and invest public funds in the development, attraction, and retention of emerging businesses, new technologies, and economic diversification. This support focuses on leveraging the strengths of the region while diversifying the economy into new areas.

The presence of innovation and entrepreneur support in local government strategies, supported by a commitment of resources, can send a strong message that innovation and entrepreneurship is valued and encouraged in the region. Conversely, an absence of visible and practical support can result in entrepreneurs being attracted to neighbouring regions where there is greater support for new ideas and development.

Local governments also support and advocate for other liability and infrastructure aspects critical for innovation and entrepreneurship. A key aspect of a thriving entrepreneur ecosystem is that entrepreneurs and emerging knowledge workers want to live, work, and play in the region. development organisations such as **BIEDO** and **Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise**.

## Observation

Innovation was a consistent theme from the **2014-2020 North Burnett Economic Development Plan**<sup>lvi</sup> and the theme continued in the **North Burnett Economic Development & Innovation Strategy**<sup>lviii</sup>. The previous South Burnett economic development plan was the **2014-2019 South Burnett Economic Development Strategy** which referenced innovation and entrepreneurship as a decision-making framework and a goal without specific initiatives identified. The 2021-2026 South Burnett Regional Development Strategy identifies three regional enablers of infrastructure, investment and growth, and investment attraction.

Other local government roles to note that relate to North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett is the innovation and entrepreneur support activity in nearby Toowoomba and Bundaberg regions. Toowoomba was recently awarded state government support for an **AgTech and Logistics Hub** and Bundaberg was awarded federal support for the **Hinkler AgTech hub**<sup>lix</sup>. When compared to the combined population and gross regional product of North and South Burnett, Bundaberg is around two times larger and Toowoomba is around four times larger than Burnett Inland, reflecting a correlation between population and innovation infrastructure. The development of innovation activity in nearby councils is an opportunity to leverage the investment and opportunity to attract activity to the wider region, while focusing on local strengths and actively encourage a 'hub and spoke' approach with nearby hubs. Another local comparative region referenced in interviews was Goondiwindi. The Goondiwindi region was noted in interviews as supportive of business and a perception of innovative and entrepreneur activity.

The innovation activity in the three regions – Bundaberg, Toowoomba, and Goondiwindi – can be examined in terms of the roles involved in developing local ecosystem activity. Toowoomba's efforts involved a local industry partner FKG<sup>lx</sup>, the local economic development organisation Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE),<sup>lxi</sup> and local universities University of Southern Queensland<sup>lxii</sup> and the University of Queensland<sup>lxiii</sup>. The Bundaberg hub involved the local council, Central Queensland University<sup>lxiv</sup>, and initial tenants including local industry Greensill Farming Group<sup>lxv</sup> and economic development organisation Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG)<sup>lxvi</sup>. While at a smaller scale, Goondiwindi recently developed the Goondiwindi Regional Innovation Network<sup>lxvii</sup> involving local industry partners, local council, and local service provider Engage and Create Consulting<sup>lxviii</sup> which also manages the local Goondiwindi Business Hub<sup>lxix</sup>. These examples are worth noting to examine the business model behind the innovation networks, what can be applied across North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett, and where the ecosystems naturally collaborate and compete.

When asked about where businesses would go to develop new ideas, North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett councils were referenced by some interviewees as a source. However, the reference to local council was as a default in the absence of knowing other options rather than from an awareness of specific services. For interviewees where there was awareness of support options, other sources such as BIEDO, local industry associations, or service providers were mentioned.

# Economic Development Organisations

## Description

Economic Development Organisations (EDOs) support local economic development activity, adding capability, capacity, and flexibility to government economic development departments and agencies.

EDOs include “Organisations that have an explicit mission to improve economic conditions in rural regions, including: workforce training institutes; chambers of commerce; economic development agencies; tourism commissions, and microfinance institutions”.

Functions performed by EDOs include advocacy, coordination and collaboration, portfolio and project management, investment attraction, and event coordination and delivery.

Typical EDO functions are outlined in the diagram on the following page<sup>lxx</sup>. 

EDOs are supported by a range of revenue models, including federal and state grants, business membership and sponsorship, fee-for-service activities including grant writing and workshops, and local government outsourcing activities. EDOs often support entrepreneur ecosystem activity in the absence of an established entrepreneur or innovation support network.

## Observation

The Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation (BIEDO) has been the primary EDO focused on North Burnett and South Burnett, established to “Enable economic development in Burnett Inland communities”<sup>1</sup>.

BIEDO has been active across a wide range of local networks and committees, including female-focused activities, agriculture, emergency response and drought resilience, and leadership. BIEDO has provided ‘boundary-spanning’ activities, participating in region-wide roundtables and committees that open information networks for local businesses. Feedback from other roles in the region towards BIEDO was positive, although there was also uncertainty from some interviewees as to the specific role that BIEDO played if the interviewee had not previously engaged with BIEDO’s services.

A challenge observed in BIEDO services relates to resource capacity and capability. Needs that were identified to be addressed include: delivery of local services direct to the business community such as grant writing or event coordination, supporting councils on specific strategic initiatives or coordination region-wide engagement programs, and developing long-term strategic planning or participating in advocacy for the region.

Examples of other EDOs in nearby regions include the **Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE)**, the **Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3)**<sup>lxxi</sup>, and the **Maranoa Business Excellence Program**<sup>lxxii</sup>. Other regions with larger local government councils engage in specific aspects of economic development activity such as investment attraction as the case with **Bundaberg Regional Council’s Invest Bundaberg**<sup>lxxiii</sup>.

Another model similar to EDOs is a coordinated local government group to enhance advocacy and program delivery across multiple regions, or a **Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC)**. Examples include the **Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (WBBROC)**<sup>lxxiv</sup> and the **Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD)**<sup>lxxv</sup>. The WBBROC is not currently functioning in Wide Bay Burnett. There is a loosely-formed group of economic development agencies that developed to support region-wide development.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.biedo.org.au/>

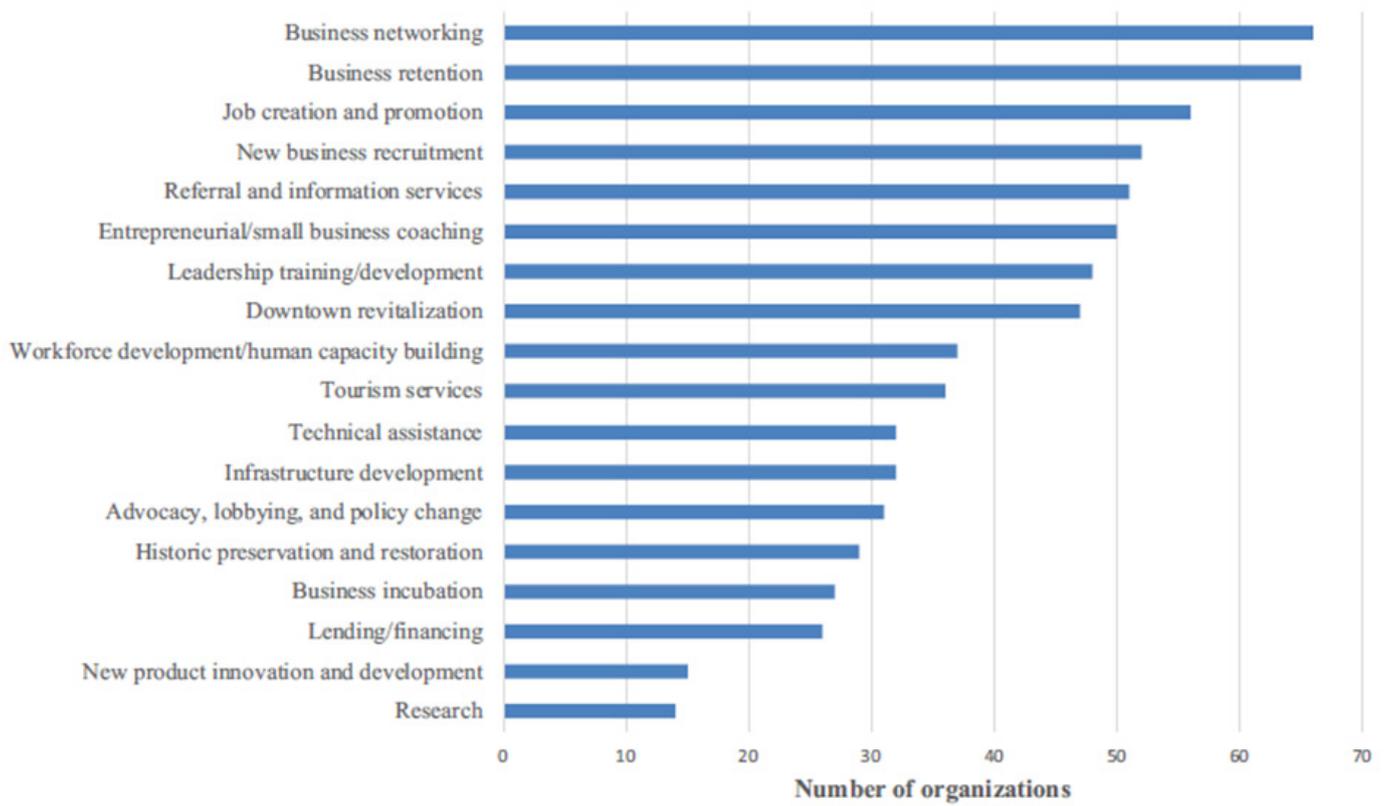


Figure 11 Functions performed by Economic Development Organisations (Ofem et al. 2020)

## Service providers

### Description

Service providers supporting economic diversification include accountants, lawyers, IT support, and other consultants with specialised skills to support innovation-driven business.

Examples of specialist services include: the ability to rapidly establish a technology business for potential future acquisition; leveraging social media for a national or global market; providing specialist technical services, manufacturing support, and IT support to develop prototypes or 'minimum viable products'; developing research and business cases for new projects; and legal support in establishing shareholders agreements for new firms.

Service providers also need to align with the nature of emerging companies to deliver cost-effective services where fees do not unnecessarily inhibit rapid growth, partnering with new companies to invest in their future rather than maximise profit from fees early in their growth.

Local service providers in regional communities are usually focused on established firms and the complexities of agriculture and resource sectors.

Specialist services for emerging companies are often unavailable in regional areas, leading to high cost of basic services or receiving support that is not suitable for emerging innovative and entrepreneurial businesses.

### Observation

The businesses engaged in the interviews did not identify service providers that could provide specialist services for rapidly establishing business structures suitable for scalable technology companies, developing minimum viable products, or support businesses in accessing government innovation incentives such as the R&D tax incentive.

Service providers interviewed focused on support for established businesses and did not focus on innovation-driven entrepreneurship. Innovation driven entrepreneurs were referred to service providers outside the region to provide access to the R&D tax incentive and development of rapid software prototypes.

Established businesses used service providers outside the region to maintain new technologies, while expressing a desire for qualified local providers to reduce costs and keep the work local.

## Peak bodies

### Description

Industry associations and peak bodies provide advocacy, network connections, research, and general support for members within a specific industry sector. Sectors can be broad such as arts, agriculture, or resources, can focus on a specific sector, such as citrus, horticulture, or cattle, and focus on a region, such as South Burnett Arts. Established businesses rely on industry associations for information about new innovations and opportunities in their industry.

### Observation

Several peak bodies support businesses in North and South Burnett, with some examples including **AgForce Queensland<sup>lxxxvi</sup>**, **Growcom<sup>lxxxvii</sup>**, **Avocados Australia<sup>lxxxviii</sup>**, **AusVeg<sup>lxxxix</sup>**, **Queensland Dairy Farmers' Organisation<sup>lxxx</sup>**, **Queensland Farmers Federation<sup>lxxxii</sup>**, **Meat and Livestock Australia<sup>lxxxiii</sup>**, **Forest and Wood Products Australia<sup>lxxxiv</sup>**, **Australia Pork Limited<sup>lxxxv</sup>**, **Citrus Australia<sup>lxxxvi</sup>**, and **Central Queensland Regional Arts Services Network (CQRASN)<sup>lxxxvii</sup>**. These groups were identified as a source for support when asked about where businesses would go to gain support on new business opportunities. However, industry associations may also not be aware of opportunities outside their area of focus.

# Corporations

## Description

Corporations have a vested interest in contributing to broader economic and community development in a region. These contributions are often targeted for specific infrastructure, workforce development, and liveability.

Corporations in regional communities relate to primary industries, such as mining companies and large firms in the agriculture supply chain including producers, processors, distribution, and national services companies.

Engagement can be through community grants, public-private partnerships, and collaborative research projects.

## Observation

Examples of corporations with an interest in Burnett Inland include Stanwell, Bega, G Crompton and Sons, Plenty Foods, SunPork, Evolution Mines, and AGL.

Corporate engagement in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) related outcomes can be addressed through structured corporate community grant programs such as Stanwell's Corporate Sponsorship Program and Community Partnership Fund<sup>lxxxviii</sup>.

For smaller companies, community support can be through ad hoc sponsorship and one-off projects. Other channels can include larger collaboration projects, such as the state government funded Advancing Regional Innovation Program, and Queensland Connects program, and the federally funded Future Drought Fund programs. These approaches have common characteristics of requiring individual direct engagement between community and individual corporates or collaborative engagement specific to a single challenge statement.

There are limited opportunities to mobilise collective corporate involvement in shared regional outcomes.

# Community Organisations and Foundations

## Description

Community organisations and foundations provide support for initiatives with a social impact in a region. Examples of focus areas include emergency response, arts and culture, First Nations, youth, disabilities, and mental health.

These organisations are almost exclusively not for profits and in infrequent instances in Australia a foundation.

## Observation

Burnett Inland hosted a number of community groups. The website My Community Directory lists 21 community organisations in North Burnett and 79 community organisations in South Burnett. However, both local government areas have their own online Directory that has a more extensive listing of community groups. The BIEDO supported Hand Up directory lists additional resources<sup>lxxxix</sup>.

Burnett Inland also hosts the Red Earth Community Foundation, one of 40 community foundations in Australia<sup>xc</sup>. The Red Earth Foundation exclusively supports the Burnett Inland region through grants, capacity-building events, and a community leadership program.

# Education providers (University, Schools, TAFE)

## Description

Education providers support workforce development and include primary and high schools, TAFE, and universities.

Schools play a role in entrepreneur ecosystems through engaging young entrepreneurs the embedding of entrepreneurial programs into school curriculum and as extra-curricular activities on school campus and centralised in the region.

Entrepreneur and enterprise development programs are often not available as part of standard curriculum, particularly in regional schools. Where programs are present in schools, they are often driven by teachers or a local advocate in the school or community. Such situations are seen in isolated examples such as the Young Techpreneurs program in Gladstone<sup>xcvi</sup> supported by the local school principal, the startup community Startup Gladstone<sup>xcvii</sup>, and the local ANZ bank branch.

While some schools develop their own programs, other schools leverage the growing presence of programs that will go into a region to deliver programs. External programs have the benefit of leveraging experience from other schools in the development of the program but can also come with higher initial cost. Delivery of external programs can also not build capability in local teachers and service providers, providing a short-term impact. Further, without additional community support and engagement, young entrepreneurs can develop new mindsets and capability that can only be realised outside the region.

Universities can play a significant role not only in skilling for the future but also through providing research for emerging entrepreneurs and innovation in established businesses. In general, Australia rates high in research but poor in translation of research into commercial outcomes<sup>xcviii</sup>. In more populated areas, a university's physical presence can be a cornerstone to an entrepreneur ecosystem through providing programs, space, and researcher. Universities can also support through providing talent, be it with students or PhD researchers to support emerging projects. Finally, universities can provide research and financial support for development of the ecosystem itself, including research into ecosystem impact and support for innovation spaces and activities.

## Observation

North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett share a context similar in many regions of a declining youth population<sup>xcix</sup>. Without a local university campus, young people leave the region for education and employment opportunities. Some post-secondary support is provided through a TAFE presence in Kingaroy<sup>xcv</sup> and Cherbourg<sup>xcvi</sup>.

In North Burnett, there are around 15 schools up to grade 6 six schools support grades 7 to 10 and four schools support grades 11 and 12.

In South Burnett, 24 schools support up to grade 6, eight schools support grades 7 and 9, six schools support grade 10, and five schools support grades 11 and 12.

Universities do not have a physical presence in North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett, although there was activity and campuses in the surrounding Wide Bay Burnett and nearby Toowoomba region.

University activity in North Burnett, Cherbourg and South Burnett is through programs and projects supported by local and state government, and through projects supporting local businesses. For example, a team from **QUT** supported a local business in exploring waste recycling options<sup>xcvii</sup> and the **Rural Economies Centre of Excellence**<sup>xcviii</sup> with **USQ** was involved in supporting local economic development activities.

The engagement of universities in North Burnett and South Burnett can be ad hoc or as part of an overall engagement with Wide Bay Burnett such as Central Queensland University's involvement with the Bundaberg Hinkler AgTech hub.

# 3.0 Strategies

Strategic plans provide valuable insights into the intended direction of a region. Strategic plans are developed from input from community and constituents from the authoring organisations.

Strategies are also an indication of resource commitment by significant organisations in the region.

## This section reviews strategic initiatives relevant to the Burnett Inland.

The review identifies what roles consider as their accountability and responsibility. For strategies developed in the past, the review identifies where there may be gaps in capacity or capability in execution on intended strategies.

These considerations of priorities, accountabilities, capacity, and capability are used to understand where there might be gaps, which roles might be positioned to address those gaps, and the place of a region-wide futures strategy.

## Strategy analysis

16 strategic plans  
920 initiatives  
49 themes

### Analysis:

Status  
Internal or external focus  
Accountability alignment

### Observations:

Areas of shared impact



Figure 12 Strategic Plans assessed in the Burnett inland Futures review

## Strategy analysis

A sample of available strategic plans were selected from organisations identified from the ecosystem mapping process.

For the purpose of the review, strategies include strategic plans, corporate plans, and investment prospectus. This is based on the criteria of being informed by a constituent base and forecasting intended resource allocation.

The table below provides a list of the document and the time span in which the strategy is applied.

Document	From	To
Bundaberg Regional Council: Sustainable Bundaberg 2030	2020	2030
Burnett Catchment Care Association: Monto Agricultural Strategy	2019	No date
Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation (BIEDO): BIEDO Strategic Plan 2016-2020	2016	2020
Department of Industry, Innovation and Science: Regional Jobs and Investment Packages Wide Bay Burnett Region Local Investment Plan	2017	No date
National Farmers Federation: 2030 Roadmap		2030
North Burnett Regional Council: 2017-2022 Corporate Plan	2017	2022
North Burnett Regional Council: North Burnett Regional Council Economic Development & Innovation Strategy	2019	No date
North Burnett Regional Council: The North Burnett Region – Where Opportunity & Lifestyle Align”, Economic Development Plan for the North Burnett Region 2014-2020	2014	2020
Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee (REDAC): Wide Bay Burnett Economic Development Strategy	2019	2024
South Burnett Regional Council: 2021-2026 South Burnett Regional Development Strategy	2021	2026
South Burnett Regional Council: Corporate Plan 2021-2026	2021	2026
South Burnett Regional Council: South Burnett Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23		
Transport and Main Roads (TMR): Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2019–20 to 2022–23	2019	2023
Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (WBBROC): Building the future trade potential of the Wide Bay Burnett driving prosperity through greater infrastructure investment	No date	No date
Wide Bay Burnett Resources Group: Wide Bay Burnett Minerals Region Investment Attraction Strategy	2020	No date
Wide Bay Burnett Resources Group: Wide Bay Burnett Minerals Region Investment Prospectus	2020	No date

Table 1 Strategic Plans assessed in the Burnett inland Futures review

# Strategy analysis

Each plan is structured differently, but each generally follow a format of cascading levels of focus from theme, focus, and initiative or action. Over 920 strategies and initiatives were identified in the plans. A sample of 652 strategy and initiative are reviewed and categorised against 49 themes to identify the emphasis in the region and the focus for each plan and the focus for the document owner. Figure 13 shows highlights where initiatives aligned with themes for each strategy.

Owner	Bundaberg Regional Council	Burnett Catchment Care Association	North Burnett Regional Council		Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee	South Burnett Regional Council	Wide Bay Burnett Resources Group
Document	Sustainable Bundaberg 2030	Monto Agricultural Strategy	2017-2022 Corporate Plan	Economic Development Strategy & Innovation Strategy	Wide Bay Burnett Economic Development Strategy	2021-2026 South Burnett Regional Development Strategy	Wide Bay Burnett Minerals Region Investment Attraction Strategy
Advocacy							
Agriculture							
Arts, culture, and creative sector							
Brand and promotion							
Business and project efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness							
Collaboration and partnerships							
Community							
Connections and networks							
Diversity							
Economic diversification							
Education and awareness							
Environmental impact response							
Environmental sustainability							
Events							
Exports markets							
Health and wellbeing							
Housing							
Indigenous							
Infrastructure							
Infrastructure - Energy							
Infrastructure - ICT							
Infrastructure - Livability & amenities							
Infrastructure - Logistics							
Infrastructure - Sites							
Infrastructure - Transport							
Infrastructure - Water and waste							
Innovation and entrepreneurship							
Innovation infrastructure - physical							
Innovation infrastructure - programs							
Institutional leadership							
International							
Investment attraction and activation							
Logistics							
Major projects							
Manufacturing							
Mining							
Open innovation							
People and population							
Planning and development							
Reputation							
Research and data							
Sports, entertainment, livability							
Supply chain							
Systems and software							
Tourism							
Waste, recycling, circular economy							
Workforce, talent, and skills							
Youth							

## Frequent themes

Theme frequency can be considered to the extent that the theme is referenced across all documents as well as the emphasis of the theme in a single document.

The most frequent themes (over 30 instances) include:

- Institutional Leadership (leadership internal to the institution, including governance and efficiencies, or leadership in the community);
- Brand and promotion;
- Planning and development;
- Education and awareness; and
- Advocacy.

The next frequent themes (20 to 30 instances) include:

- Infrastructure, Infrastructure – Transport, and Infrastructure - liveability and amenities;
- Innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Business and project efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness; and
- Collaboration and partnerships.

These themes are consistent across strategy documents.

While specific initiatives may vary, it would be expected that future strategies would reflect similar themes and emphasis.

A future strategy will also need to consider the extent that strategies align with and support current prominent strategies to avoid competing interests in the region.

## Infrequent themes

There were a number of themes with relatively infrequent references (less than five). These include:

- Diversity
- Economic diversification
- Health - mental and emotional
- Innovation infrastructure - programs
- Logistics
- Manufacturing
- Open innovation
- Arts, culture, and creative sector
- People and population
- Export markets
- Innovation infrastructure - physical
- Mining
- Reputation
- Housing
- Indigenous
- Infrastructure - Energy
- Supply chain
- Systems and software
- Agriculture
- Sports, entertainment, liveability
- Environmental impact response
- Infrastructure - Logistics
- Youth

It is acknowledged that many of the themes are related to other themes and can be refined, for example "open innovation" being a specific focus on "innovation and entrepreneurship", or "Reputation" being related to "Brand and Promotion". The themes are also not exclusive, meaning an initiative may have been designated as "advocacy" while also relating to "agriculture" or "export markets". Other themes are inherently related, such as "Workforce" and "Youth", or "International" and "Export markets".

However, the review does highlight areas where there may be less of a focus on the strategies, such as "diversity", "Indigenous", "mental health", or "export markets". Long-term strategies often focus on infrastructure and broad economic or community development. Areas such as business owner mental health or support for indigenous businesses can get overlooked in strategic planning unless the area becomes a priority due to a local event or political will.

## Strategy gaps and opportunities

The strategic initiatives were considered to the extent that they have been realised, the extent that the strategies are in line with the accountabilities of the owner of the strategic plan, and the extent by which the strategies can be measured. The analysis was performed as an initial assessment with multiple local experts and may not completely reflect the current status.

The results of the analysis are outlined below and in Table on the next page.

First, the analysis considers the **status (Column A)**:

- 1. Not started** - the initiative does not appear to have commenced
- 2. Evolved** - the strategy has changed as a result of the organisation's purpose or market conditions
- 3. Minimal** - Little progress made against the strategy
- 4. Somewhat** - Moderate progress against the strategy
- 5. Mostly** - The strategy is mostly complete
- 6. Complete** - The strategy is complete
- 7. Not realised** - The strategy is not realised past the closure date of the strategic plan
- 8. Not actionable** - The strategy is not defined enough to be actioned
- 9. Unknown** - The status of the strategy is not known based on information available.

Second, the analysis considers whether the strategy focuses on the **internal organisation** that developed the strategy or the **external community (Columns B & C)**. Examples of internally focused initiatives include improving operational efficiency or establishing governance structures of the author of the strategy plan. Externally focused strategies rely on or are focused on impacting organisations outside the author of the strategic plan.

Third, the analysis considers whether the strategy appears to be **aligned** to the organisation's main accountabilities (**Columns D, E & F**). For example, a local government action to facilitate connection between local business and innovation service providers may not be aligned with core accountabilities, as compared to a local government initiative to advocate for local infrastructure investment.

The analysis highlights some observations about strategies focused on Burnett Inland. For strategies focused on the internal organisation, 21 per cent are considered as complete or mostly complete, as compared to 13 per cent of strategies externally focused. This may highlight the complexity inherent to achieving strategic outcomes that rely on multiple stakeholders.

For the few initiatives identified as not aligned with the authoring organisation, 46 per cent were identified as not having started. Initiatives deemed as aligned with the organisation were more likely to be identified as mostly or fully complete.

# Strategy analysis

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>Strategy Status</b>	<b>Internal to organisation</b>	<b>External / Others</b>	<b>Not aligned</b>	<b>Somewhat aligned</b>	<b>Aligned</b>
1	Not started	12	58	6	31	31
2	Evolved	0	1	0	0	1
3	Minimal	28	180	4	67	122
4	Somewhat	48	185	0	56	162
5	Mostly	14	48	0	2	59
6	Complete	9	15	0	2	18
7	Not realised	0	6	3	1	2
8	Not actionable	0	2	1	0	1
9	Unknown	22	24	0	11	35

Table 2 Strategic initiative progress based on accountability and alignment (count)

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>Strategy Status</b>	<b>Internal to organisation</b>	<b>External / Others</b>	<b>Not aligned</b>	<b>Somewhat aligned</b>	<b>Aligned</b>
1	Not started	11%	12%	46%	19%	8%
2	Evolved	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3	Minimal	25%	37%	31%	42%	31%
4	Somewhat	43%	38%	0%	35%	41%
5	Mostly	13%	10%	0%	1%	15%
6	Complete	8%	3%	0%	1%	5%
7	Not realised	0%	1%	23%	1%	1%

Table 3 Strategic initiative progress based on accountability and alignment (percentage)

## Capability and capacity

Strategies that are general in nature convey intent but can be difficult to identify opportunities for execution. For example, the North Burnett Regional Council Economic Development & Innovation Strategy has a strategic focus to "Developing our Innovation Eco-System" with a focus on "Start-Ups" and an initiative for "Supporting local start-ups (e.g. via incentives, incubation, acceleration or other programs) (Outcome: Business dynamism and diversity is encouraged and supported)". In the same document, the strategic focus for "Building on our Natural Strengths" has a focus on "Industry Innovation" with an initiative for "Supporting and promoting innovation within our primary industries (Outcome: Industry growth, diversification and resilience)". The first initiative has a specific identifiable outcome, whereas general innovation support and diversification can be more of a challenge to measure. Strategies focused on innovation and economic diversification also have additional capacity and capability requirements than traditional economic development, often not available within the remit of regional councils.

## Ownership and necessary scope

Strategies may accurately reflect the needs of the region but may not be owned or adopted by a stakeholder with the appropriate capacity and accountability for execution. For example, the Monto Agriculture Strategy provides a good level of detail in 65 initiatives across a wide range of themes. Developed in 2019, there may be challenges in identifying the extent that the initiatives have been actioned.

The strategy highlights this challenge in its description on how the strategy will be delivered:

**Implementation of this strategy is required from all levels of the community including government, non-government organisations, grower groups and industry. Realising this vision is a shared responsibility that does not rest with a single group or organisation, but rather successful implementation will require a collaborative effort and investment from all stakeholders and levels of government.**

### *Monto Agriculture Strategy*

Without existing collaborative structure in place, shared accountability can result in an absence of accountability as strategies that are 'everyone's responsibility' become 'no one's responsibility'.

## Aligned accountability and structural support to execute

Strategies need to be positioned within the accountability and remit of the author of the strategic plan. Local governments in regional communities can be seen as needing to be 'all things to all people', fulfilling functions across advocating, planning, executing, and delivering.

The 2021-2026 South Burnett Regional Development Strategy is an example of a local government plan aligned to accountabilities, with an emphasis on investment attraction, facilitation, advocacy, and support within local government remit of infrastructure, planning and development, major projects. Released in 2021 with a five-year horizon, the strategy provides an opportunity to develop structural support in the region to facilitate the collaboration, partnership, and capacity for implementation outside of local government's resource capability and capacity.

## Shared regional outcomes

Strategies have a geographic remit. Plans from South Burnett and North Burnett regional councils are understandably focused on their respective LGAs.

State-based strategies such as the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science Regional Jobs and Investment Packages Wide Bay Burnett Region Local Investment Plan applies across the Wide Bay Burnett with the exception of an initiative for "Infrastructure to enhance development at the Port of Bundaberg".

Region-focused strategies such as the Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee's Wide Bay Burnett Economic Development Strategy applies across the region's seven LGAs. However, the uncertainty for the future of the underlying Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (WBBROC) places the ability to execute on the strategy in question.

Further, without intentional emphasis on periphery communities such as North Burnett, South Burnett, and Cherbourg, the execution of the strategy would be expected to benefit regions with greater representation and resource density. The Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation (BIEDO) strategy does focus exclusively on North Burnett and South Burnett, while the initiatives are focused on themes related to BIEDO's services and do not consider broader themes such as long-term infrastructure.

## 4.0 Narrative analysis

Interviews were conducted in 2019 and 2020 to assess the local capacity and capability for supporting innovation and entrepreneurial activity in Burnett Inland.

The interviews with over 40 leaders in the community highlighted enabling and inhibiting factors specific to engaging in economic diversification activities.

Interviews followed a structure exploring the current context, the future opportunity, and proposed strategies:

- How are new business ideas developed in the region? Who is involved? Who is good at it? If you have an idea for something new, where do you go? What is your involvement? What currently enables success?
- What are some of the main challenges facing the local region? The wider region? What inhibits success?
- Think ahead say one to three years. What could it look like if we were to explore ways to attract and develop new business ideas, with a focus on new technology and economic diversity? What would that look like for you? Would you be involved? How? (New idea yourself, mentor, investor, host activity, advocate, services, etc.)
- What would need to happen to make that happen? What are things that would help make it a success?

The interviews identified inhibitors and enablers for local entrepreneurs, as well as potential strategies and opportunities for the future for entrepreneur activities in the region.

Comments from interviewees are themed against known inhibiting and enabling contributing factors to dimensions of community resilience:

- **Built environment / infrastructure:** Robustness, redundancy, efficiency, and design of infrastructure including physical assets such as coworking and shared offices, internet, and transport
- **Institutional:** Performance of roles and their interaction in the ecosystem, including leadership and participation, management of resources, emergency response, collaboration, R&D, regulations, and education and training
- **Social and individual:** Social structure, community bonds, safety and well-being, equity and diversity, and local culture
- **Economic:** Factors relating to the structure, security, and dynamism of the local economy and economic impacts on individuals and firms.

A summary of enablers and inhibitors identified from the interviews is outlined in Figure 14 and further details outlined in Table 4 and Table 5.

● **Infrastructure** ● **Institutional** ● **Social & individual** ● **Economic**



## Enabling factors

Engage established business  
Incumbent leadership  
Personal relationship and trust  
Personal relationship with leaders  
Support for local community leaders  
Use existing assets

## Inhibiting factors

Bureaucracy  
Dependant on the individual  
Lack of access to talent  
Lack of awareness and understanding  
Lack of capability  
Lack of capacity in ecosystem leaders  
Lack of a common challenge  
Lack of leadership and direction  
Lack of legitimacy  
Lack of perceived value  
Lack of redundancy  
Lack of service provider curation/  
availability/Lack of specialist focus  
Lack of startup focus  
Lack of sustainable business model  
Low number of specialist skills  
Poor internet connectivity  
Remoteness

## Resilience

Figure 14 Enabling and inhibiting factors identified from stakeholder interviews - 2020

## Enablers

● Infrastructure ● Institutional ● Social & individual ● Economic

Inhibiting contributing factor	Description	Consideration
Engage established business ● Economic	Entrepreneurial activity identified in the conversation came from established business owners who had networks, industry and business experience, and sources of capital to pursue new endeavours. There were several comments of people willing to 'give it a go' and support from existing businesses.	The established business community will be an essential part of an innovation ecosystem, while allowing for new and emerging businesses.
Incumbent leadership Personal relationship and trust Personal relationship with leaders ● Social & individual	Established and incumbent leadership from councils, BIEDO, and peak bodies were recognised as supportive of entrepreneur activities. Existing networking groups including Women in Agriculture and Agriculture Network Meetings for North Burnett and South Burnett, facilitated by BIEDO.	As new forms of entrepreneur support are considered, supporting and leveraging existing relationships and networks will be key.
Support for local community leaders ● Institutional	The role of local leadership in BIEDO was recognised and supported through relationships with council and other community groups in the region.	As new forms of entrepreneur support are considered, supporting and leveraging existing relationships and networks will be key.
Use existing assets ● Infrastructure	While there were limited dedicated spaces for entrepreneur activity, existing spaces of libraries, cafes, pubs, and established businesses were used to support networking and engagement.	Local assets can be 'activated' through events and meetups. Consistent and regular events can help raise awareness and create a 'third space' while also supporting local food retail and other assets.

# Inhibitors

● Infrastructure ● Institutional ● Social & individual ● Economic

Inhibiting contributing factor	Description	Consideration
Bureaucracy ● ● ●	Engaging with government processes at both local and state levels were described by some as 'laborious and expensive, including permits and approvals. Entrepreneurs and established businesses seeking to expand operations pursue locations that were perceived as having support for business growth.	Simplify government support and regulations for emerging businesses while developing a support network to help navigate necessary government processes.
Dependant on the individual ●	Support services and networks referenced as being dependent on the capability of one person, as noted 'when someone leaves, it is hard to fill the gap'.	Support existing leaders with networks and actively develop new leaders and networks, while ensuring sustainable financial support models.
Lack of access to talent ●	Entrepreneurs referenced needing to go outside the region to access technical talent and skills, often with increased direct cost as well as delays in securing talent and uncertainty in quality and accountability of remote workers.	Long-term strategy for developing local talent through university, TAFE, high schools, and education providers, while establishing trusted sources of remote talent.
Lack of awareness and understanding ●	There was a lack of shared understanding of entrepreneurial activity, opportunities, and support options in the region.	Establish a shared, common narrative, supported with activity and actions in the region.
Lack of capability ● ● ●	While there was a strength in established business models, there was also a lack of capability specific to emerging business models related to rapid access to new markets and new technologies to take advantage of those markets. Support was limited to services such as Business Leap and resources introduced through networks such as BIEDO.	Establish a network to coordinate and expand existing capability as well as bring in external providers to build local capability and capacity.
Lack of capacity in ecosystem leaders ●	Entrepreneur support is often provided based on funded grants for service providers or volunteer support from not for profits, impacting the capacity and confidence in future delivery.	Secure reliable and consistent funding for local entrepreneur support.
Lack of a common challenge ●	There was no overarching strategy or focus to focus and mobilise local entrepreneurial effort. There are many challenges and opportunities in the region, but many challenges create competing interests for scarce resources without a coordinated approach to regional priorities.	Establish a region-wide narrative, unique to North Burnett and South Burnett while aligning with innovation networks and activity in surrounding regions.

# Inhibitors

● Infrastructure ● Institutional ● Social & individual ● Economic

Inhibiting contributing factor	Description	Consideration
Lack of leadership and direction ● ●	There was a lack of identified leadership and direction specific to entrepreneurial activity across the region. When asked where one might go for support for new types of businesses or new technologies, responses ranged from local government, BIEDO, peak bodies, or networks outside the region. This also extended to established businesses who might provide examples from aspiring entrepreneurs.	Establish a central leadership role for entrepreneur support in the region.
Lack of legitimacy ●	Without a central place for entrepreneurial support, new endeavours lacked legitimacy relative to established industry activity and business models.	Provide demonstrated support for entrepreneurship and innovation from established and respected institutions, including Chambers, Councils, and established businesses.
Lack of perceived value ● ●	Without proven local examples to draw from, there was a lack of perceived value in new entrepreneurial activities.	Develop local media to demonstrate the value and share stories of entrepreneurial activity.
Lack of redundancy ●	Functions related to entrepreneur support relied on one or two organisations, such as Business Leap or BIEDO. While these roles were seen as effective by those who were aware of their services, there was a lack of redundancy and network support.	Establish a network to provide local and external support options for local entrepreneurs.
Lack of service provider curation / availability / Lack of specialist focus ●	Local entrepreneurs sourcing service providers for specialist support such as digital, legal, or financial advice relied on their own networks and did not necessarily have the necessary information to select appropriate providers.	While establishing local specialist service providers is not necessarily viable, a network can assist with the process of curating and negotiation with providers.
Lack of startup focus ●	Some support was provided for establishing new businesses, but not for startups characterised by leveraging technology and rapid access to external markets, such as that found in emerging innovation hub in surrounding regions.	Provide specialist support for startup business models through networks, events, and information and networking sessions linking the local region to outside markets.
Lack of sustainable business model ●	Entrepreneur support is often provided based on funded grants for service providers or volunteer support from not for profits, impacting the capacity and confidence in future delivery.	Secure reliable and consistent funding for local entrepreneur support.

# Inhibitors

● Infrastructure ● Institutional ● Social & individual ● Economic

Inhibiting contributing factor	Description	Consideration
Low number of specialist skills ●	Local entrepreneurs sourcing service providers for specialist support such as digital, legal, or financial advice relied on their own networks and did not necessarily have the necessary information to select appropriate providers.	While establishing local specialist service providers is not necessarily viable, a network can assist with the process of curating and negotiation with providers.
Poor internet connectivity ●	Access to reliable high-speed Internet connectivity was raised as a barrier particularly for businesses engaging customers and supply chains outside the region.	Continue advocacy for region-wide connectivity, while activating localised hubs for connectivity.
Remoteness ● ● ●	Interviewees commented on overall challenges with remoteness inhibiting entrepreneurial activity, contributing to other factors such as infrastructure, access to resources, and slow speed to markets.	Provide social and digital systems and networks to compensate what is taken for granted with physical density, while focusing entrepreneur attention on local challenges and opportunities not available in other regions.

Table 5 Inhibiting factors identified in stakeholder interviews - 2020

## Narrative reflections

The interviews identify opportunities to address challenges of connection and collaboration and to build on existing networks and goodwill inherent to established business networks. Barriers of bureaucracy, and lack of capability and capacity need to be considered as well as addressing challenges related to leadership of capacity, capability, and redundancy.

These challenges are experienced across the region. Initiatives to collectively address these issues would not be found in any one strategic initiative. The consistency of the feedback reflects the extent that the issues are complex, embedded, and systemic and unlikely to be addressed by any one institution. The question can be asked as to what will change if the approaches to developing solutions remain the same. Conversely, opportunities for new structures and approaches can be explored to address complex challenges across the region.

# 5.0 Regional transition models

This review considered:

- the Burnett Inland regional context,
- roles observed in the local ecosystem of support for regional transition,
- strategic plans that reflect intent for resource commitment; and
- narratives from local leaders that reflect enabling and inhibiting factors in the community.

The next section considers principles, theory, and a case study on approaches to regional development and transition. Regional development and economic transition is an expansive topic and the discussion points are far from exhaustive. The points below are intended to provide support for conversations and considerations for Burnett Inland Futures.

## Principles of ecosystem building

Every region is unique with its own culture, history, and industry, and demographic make-up. These differences make a shared set of principles important to reliably develop approaches to developing local ecosystems. The list of principles below is based on research into shared experiences from regional leaders for ecosystem development that apply across social and ecological ecosystems.

### 7 principles for enhancing innovation ecosystem services

Sourced from Biggs et al (2012) Toward Principles for Enhancing the Resilience of Ecosystem Services

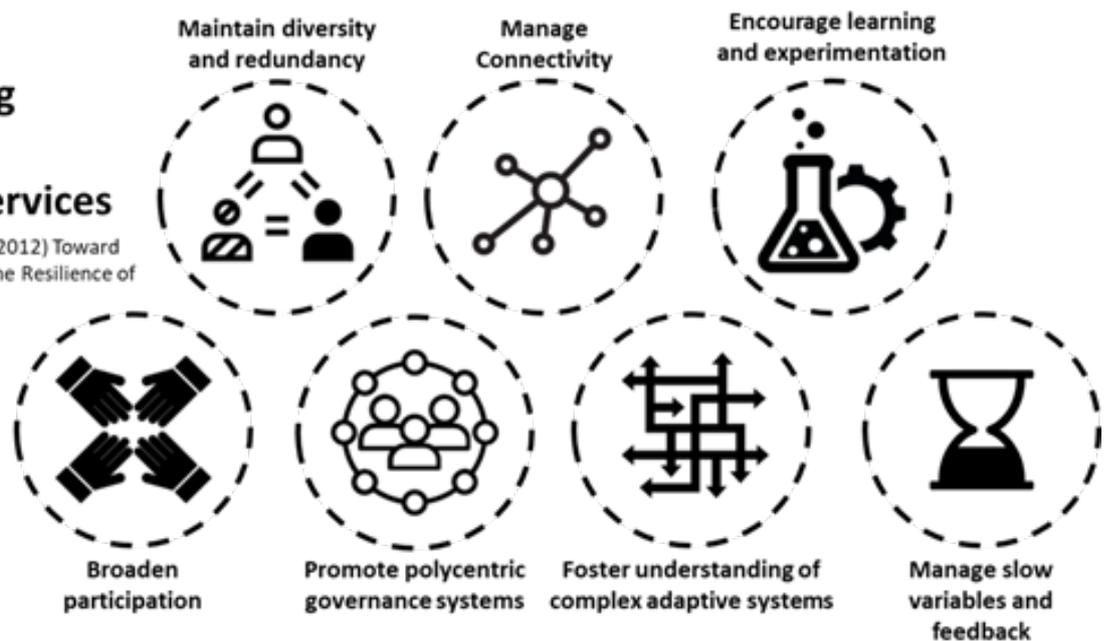


Figure 15 Principles for enhancing innovation ecosystem services

## 1 Principle 1: Maintain diversity and redundancy

A thriving ecosystem requires diverse roles and perspectives as well as reliance on more than one individual in a given role. Addressing complex challenges building requires new forms of thinking that are only possible from varied backgrounds and perspectives. Without intentional focus on diverse groups, there is a risk that development efforts will benefit those who already have access to services and miss those who are on the periphery. Further, regional ecosystems are highly dependent upon a few individuals spread across multiple disciplines. Where possible, resilience is built into the system through identifying backups for roles and leadership, including succession planning opportunities.

## 2 Principle 2: Manage connectivity

Connectivity includes physical, social, and digital connection. Regional communities need to be intentional to leverage social and digital channels to compensate for what is taken for granted in their more populated metro counterparts. This includes relying on individuals, organisations, and programs that span geographic, industry, and functional boundaries. These 'boundary-spanning individuals and activities help break down silos and open the flow of knowledge and financial capital. These boundary spanning efforts are enabled by trust, shared challenges, and shared value.

## 3 Principle 3: Encourage learning and experimentation

Australia ranks high globally in terms of fear of failure inhibiting entrepreneurial activities. This characteristic is increased in regional areas, where close social ties and generational relationships increase risk of loss of social standing. The resulting 'tall poppy syndrome' is contrary to the entrepreneurial culture of learning from and celebrating failure. Ecosystem building in regional communities does not address fear of failure 'head on' but creates a counter-culture environment as a respite to fear-based inhibitions.

## 4 Principle 4: Broaden participation

Development in regions can be inhibited if participation is restricted based on status or membership to a particular group or organisation, Ecosystem building needs to bring everyone around the table, including community groups, service providers, local chambers, government, incumbent businesses, schools, marginalised communities, and more. A main inhibitor in any social change is 'us versus them'. Efforts to develop capacity in regions need to ensure each party can see their role in the change and their DNA on the results.

## 5 Principle 5: Promote polycentric governance systems

Hierarchical and rules-based approaches created the current context. New and emerging governance models are applied where the solution does not sit in a single institution. It is only through distributed leadership, collaborative approaches, and collective impact that complex challenges can be addressed. This describes the needs of developing ecosystems.

## 6 Principle 6: Foster understanding of complex adaptive systems

Ecosystems are complex adaptive systems, meaning they are emerging, uncertain, and adapt rapidly based on unknown feedback in an open system. When considering regional change and development, it can be tempting to rely on a single established strategy or a single institution like government to have the answers. While strategies and strong leadership is important, resilient regions creates space for the system to emerge, manage evolving expectations from stakeholders, and embed transparent feedback mechanisms through visible celebrations and activities to accommodate emerging situations.

## 7 Principle 7: Maintain slow variables and feedback

Ecosystems require several years for what can be generational change. Lag measures such as jobs and investment are the result of variable lead measures that can be difficult to quantify, such as connections and network strength. Development efforts need to embed metrics that are both qualitative and quantitative and engage roles such as media and universities to ensure measurement and communications are managed.

## Time required

Development efforts take time. Research into the time required for the contribution of new business activity on the economy notes highlights that in addition to time, new business activity requires a density of new enterprises to realise outcomes of increased number of companies, jobs, and economic diversification<sup>xcix</sup>. The impact of new business can take between five to seven years and a density of new activity for value in the local community to be realised.

This is relevant when considering the roles involved in supporting economic diversification in a region. Traditional forms such as government can be impacted by election cycles and staff turnover. Established corporate institutions often have a mandate for economic gain that moderates long-term investment in the region. Organisational structures are required to sustain a long-term vision and support the development of new business density.

## The case for external structures

Regional transition is complex, requiring engagement and coordination across diverse stakeholder groups, specialist leadership capability, and long-term capacity and investment.

Pressures are increasing to develop new models outside of established institutions for economic development activity. These pressures include:

- declines in the industrial base,
- increases in unemployment and poverty,
- reductions in financial support for municipal services,
- competition within the international market, and
- the need to attract highly mobile capital<sup>c</sup>.

External models for economic development achieve outcomes including:

- To serve as a buffer between economic development and politics;
- Support “entrepreneurial city governments” wanting to build closer relationships with local businesses; and
- Foster collaboration among local organisations and gain a broader approach to local economic development<sup>ci</sup>.

Smaller communities are more likely to use external not for profit economic development structures. These external not for profit structures are more likely to promote small businesses and community development compared to public sector counterparts. However, there are also a smaller number of not-for-profit economic development models in smaller communities, and the not-for-profit organisations that are available tend to provide more generalised / less specialised services. This places an emphasis on needing quality, capacity, and capability in the not for profit<sup>cii</sup>.



## The case for external structures

Where there is a capable provider of economic development services in a region, it is more likely to be engaged by high growth businesses to result in growth strategies including hiring additional staff, entering new markets, introducing a new product or service, making major investments in facilities or equipment, and increasing sales<sup>ciii</sup>.

Organisations providing support in a region are more likely to be successful if they have a higher number of partners (relative centrality) and if there are higher number of shared ties with other roles in the network (structural embeddedness)<sup>civ</sup>.

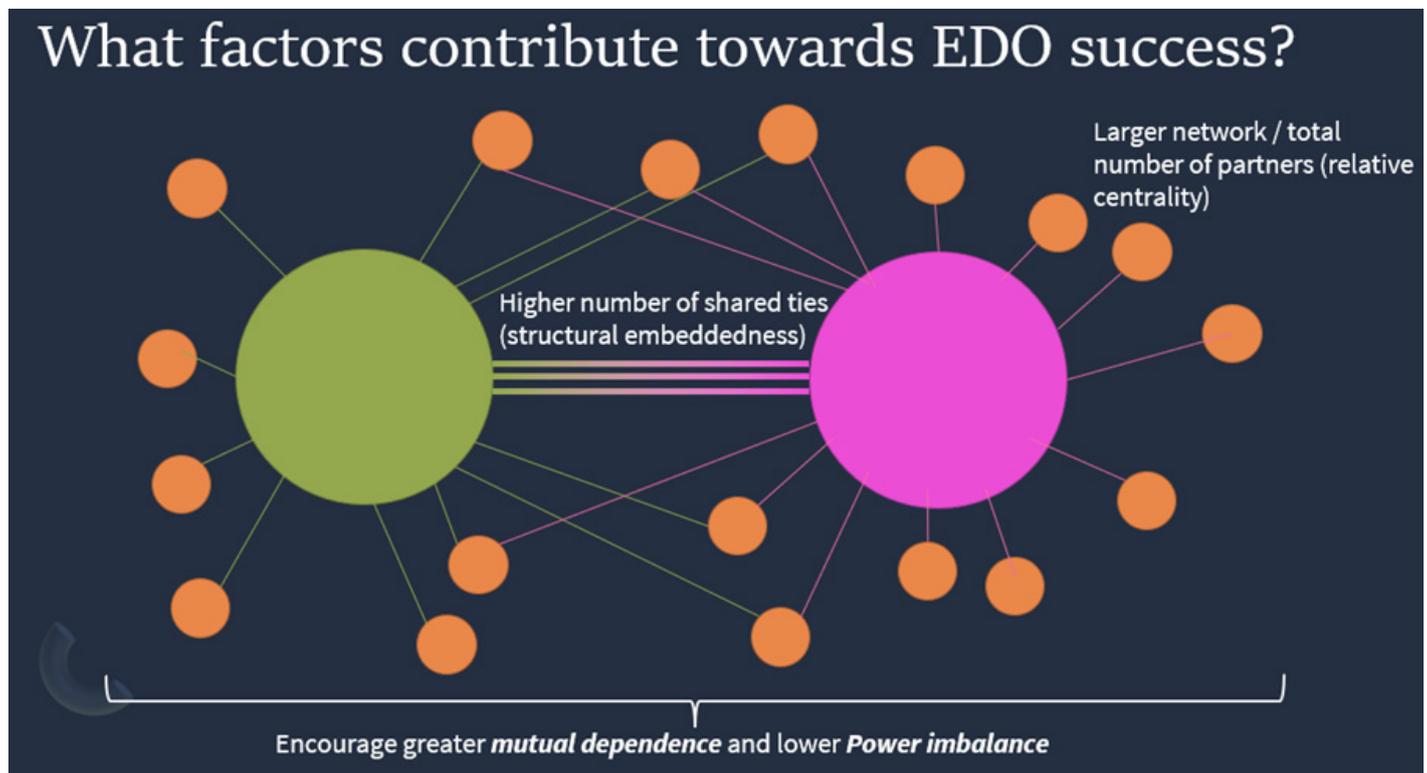


Figure 16 Factors contributing to Economic Development Organisation success

The reasons for engaging in collaborative, outsourced models can vary.

Some of the rational for using external development organisations by economic development practitioners include<sup>cv</sup>:

- Better suited for increasingly complicated economic development process
- EDCs as business entities have better understanding of the changing global circumstances
- Gives more structured focus to economic development
- Less bureaucratic and more dynamic (e.g. better marketing tool)
- Ensures community participation in economic development
- Have better understanding of the needs of private companies
- Ensures that economic development is done with private sector mentality
- Able to draw resources from a variety of sources
- Effective way to market small communities as a large regional market
- Ensure co-operation among municipalities (esp. those with a regional government)
- Operating at arm's-length from the city means corporation can add value to their business attraction experience

# Collective response

## Collective impact and backbone structures

A response to addressing challenges with communities in transition is through collective structures that exhibit characteristics of accountability and transparency, legitimacy, equality policies, a participatory organisational structure, social innovation and entrepreneurial orientation to provide governance<sup>cv</sup>.

A collective impact or collective action framework is an example of an approach to address challenges in economic diversification such as a lack of managerial and operational skills among community leaders, a lack of agreed central leadership, and bottlenecks from decisions made by consensus<sup>cvi</sup>.

The collective impact approach gets organisations together that have a common agenda, develop a form of shared measurement, share mutually reinforcing activities, have practices of continuous communication, and establish a backbone structure<sup>cvi</sup>.

The backbone structure is a collaborative structure similar to other collaborative roles of clustering, hybrid interorganisational partnerships, integrative public leadership, 'shared leadership', or 'community-based leadership'.

The primary activities of a backbone structure are to: (1) guide vision and strategy; (2) support aligned activities; (3) establish shared measurement practices; (4) build public will; (5) advance policy; and (6) mobilize funding<sup>cix</sup>.

The emphasis and execution of these activities evolve over time as the role matures<sup>cx</sup>. Backbone structures often start with guiding vision and strategy and supporting aligned activities. However, the establishment of shared measurement practices may not be a focus due to limited capacity due and capability within the backbone team. The lack of measurement and reporting can result in low legitimacy and credibility to build the public will and advance policy through advocacy. As a result, backbones can struggle with sustainability and their ability to mobilise consistent funding.

### Backbone organisations: what literature and experience says

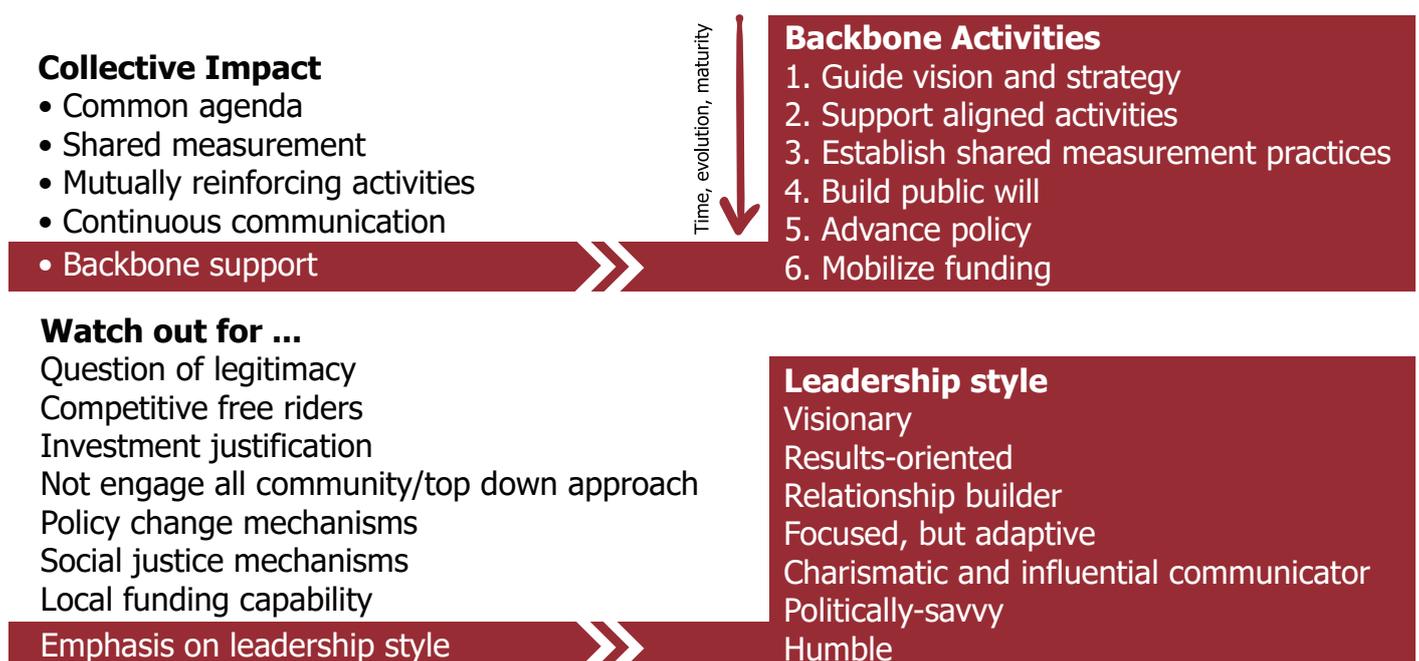


Figure 17 Principles and factors for collective impact and backbone structures

# Collective response

When considering the approach to support a backbone organisation, emerging structures can include loosely-formed steering committees, public agencies, mission-oriented not for profits, and primary funder based organisations (diagram below).

Within Australia, groups focused on economic diversification often start as loosely formed steering committees, moving to mission-oriented not for profits.

The government system does not have the consistency in leadership to support public agencies, and the model of foundations or family offices are not as established as in other economies such as the United States so as to have a prominence of primarily funder-based models.

A model for a region such as the Burnett Inland can consider support through a mission-oriented not for profit maturing into a primarily funder-based through greater support through a foundation model.



Figure 18 Structures for backbone organisations

**A representation of a backbone in Burnett Inland is outlined on the following page. The figure represents roles in the region connected through a facilitating structure and engaging in action through dedicated working groups.**



# A collective impact approach to a Burnett Inland future

Facilitated by Red Earth Community Foundation

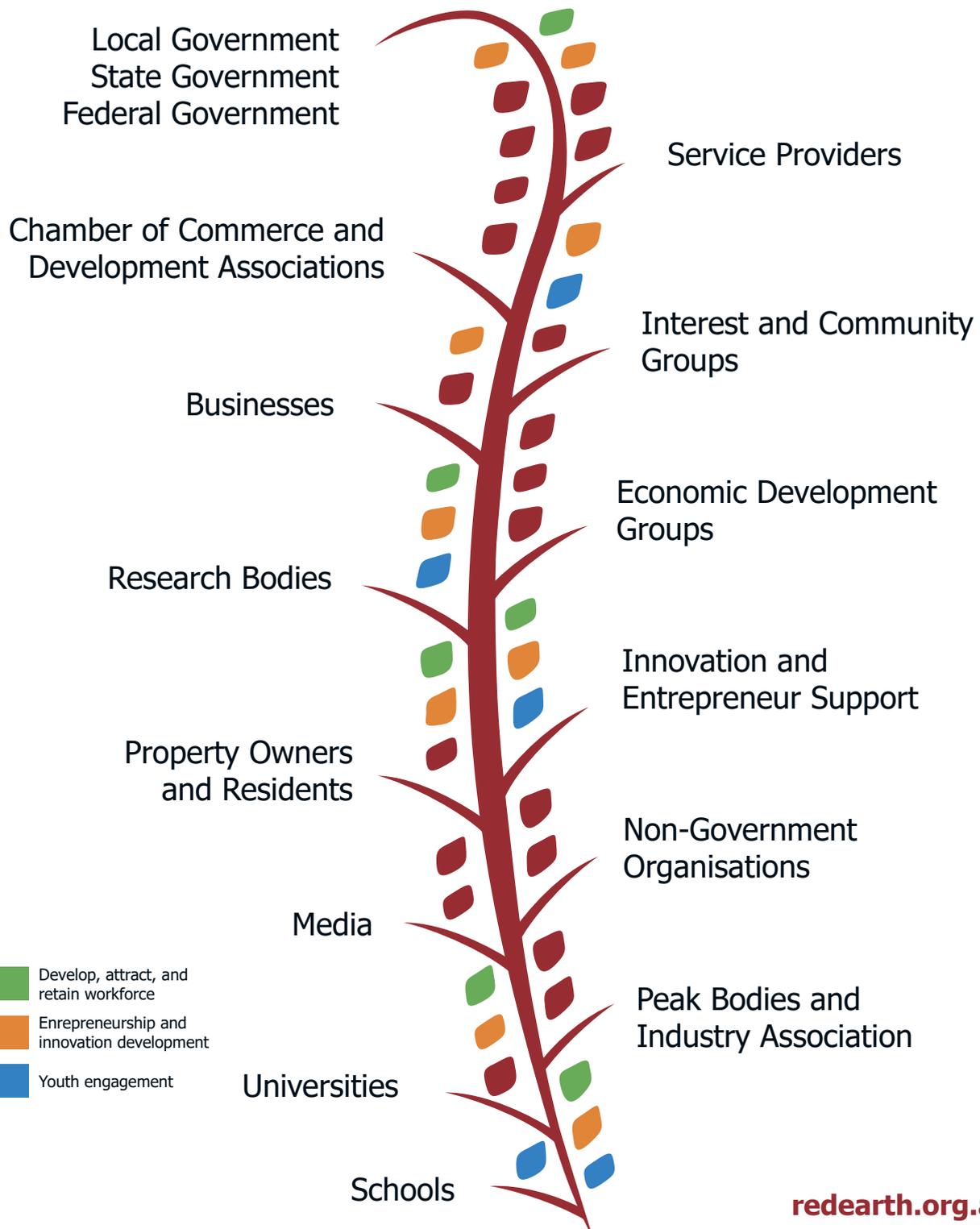


Figure 19 Backbone model for Burnett Inland

## CASE STUDY – LATROBE VALLEY

The first part of the Latrobe Valley case study is based on a peer-reviewed critical analysis of a collaborative structure developed in 2011-2012 in the coal-dependent Latrobe Valley, Victoria<sup>cx</sup>. The paper establishes the context of regional transition with “the apparent incapacity of local bureaucratic or deliberative institutions to instigate transformational changes such as closing coal mining and coal-fired power plants, especially when changes compromise local power elites or involve politically unpopular ‘temporal trade offs’”. The paper identifies multi-layered governance networks as agents of change in such transition situations.



Figure 20 LaTrobe Valley region, Victoria

The aims of networked forms of governance are stated to “bridge institutional silos, build associations that foster shared standards of behaviour, respect, and mutual obligation, and at the same time encourage the ‘habituated methodologies’ that enable agreement to develop from shared frameworks”. The paper identifies barriers to achieving these outcomes as when arrangements are imposed from the top-down, when local collaboration is weak, when the motivating aims lack credibility, or when participating stakeholders lack a uniting framework of shared underlying assumptions.

When the collaborative structure is established by policy makers, the paper notes a resistance for networked governance structure to receive feedback and maintain accountability over the course of a change process. There is a risk that evidence and data be manipulated to advance political ends, self-interest, or the ideals of some ‘particularist knowledge regime’. This is identified in the case study where evidence changed the problem definition away from remedial measures in coal towns and industrial decline and towards expansion of agriculture industries and diversification.

In the case of Latrobe Valley, the paper highlights how the development of a networked governance structure shifted the focus away from an immediate political priority towards an administrative vehicle designed to neutralise and depoliticise the problem. The outcome highlighted in the paper was the redirection of funding towards ‘shovel ready’ projects, a conclusion that diversification could be achieved through minimal state intervention, and boycotting and disengagement from the community towards the Latrobe Valley Transition Committee (LVTC). The conclusion of the paper cautions against underplaying the role of politics, manipulating evidence and feedback to suit agendas, and excluding dissenting voices.

The Latrobe Valley case study can be reviewed in detail to identify lessons to apply to Burnett Inland. The establishing report from 2012 reflects many challenges common to regions today: transitioning businesses and workers; Strengthening the workforce; Infrastructure for growth; Strengthening innovation and competitiveness; Attracting and facilitating investment; Enhancing liveability; and Working together<sup>cxii</sup>. Nearly a decade later, an inquiry into the Latrobe Valley transition will commence November 2021<sup>cxiii</sup>.

Additional collaborative structures have emerged in the region since the 2012 transition exercise. The Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) was established by the Victorian Government in 2016 in response to the closure of the Hazelwood power station “to support workers, businesses and the community to transition to a sustainable, diversified economy”<sup>cxiv</sup>. The LVA covers a diverse regional population of 125,000 and is managed by “a team of local people funded by the Victorian Government who are driven by the needs of our local community”<sup>cxv</sup>. An initiative of LVA is the Gippsland Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Growing Regional Opportunities for Work (GROW) Gippsland program - a new collaborative program that seeks to strengthen social and economic outcomes and increase job opportunities through maximising local spend in the region.

# CASE STUDY – SHAPING OUR APPALACHIAN REGION

An example of a similar structure in a related context is the Shaping our Appalachian Region (SOAR) program in Eastern Kentucky, USA. The Appalachian region, including 30 Kentucky counties, is characterised by lower-socio-economic outcomes relative to surrounding communities.



Rank	City	Population 2016	County
1	Ashland	21,038	Boyd
2	Middlesboro	9,626	Bell
3	London	8,157	Laurel
4	Morehead	7,758	Rowan
5	Corbin	7,398	Whitley and Knox
6	Flatwoods	7,311	Greenup
7	Mount Sterling	7,242	Montgomery
8	Pikeville	7,106	Pike
9	Williamsburg	5,313	Whitley
10	Hazard	5,300	Perry
11	Paintsville	4,203	Johnson
12	Grayson	4,043	Carter

## Context

- 30 Kentucky counties
- Known for coal mining
- Most of the counties classified as "persistent poverty counties" (>20% in poverty since 1980)
- Lowest 10% in life expectancy
- Over US\$9 billion in financial aid since 1965
- 13% less likely to have a high school diploma, 18% less likely for a bachelors.

Figure 21 SOAR Region Context

The region's industry profile is mixed mining and agriculture with a decrease in mining significantly impacting employment and socio-economic conditions.

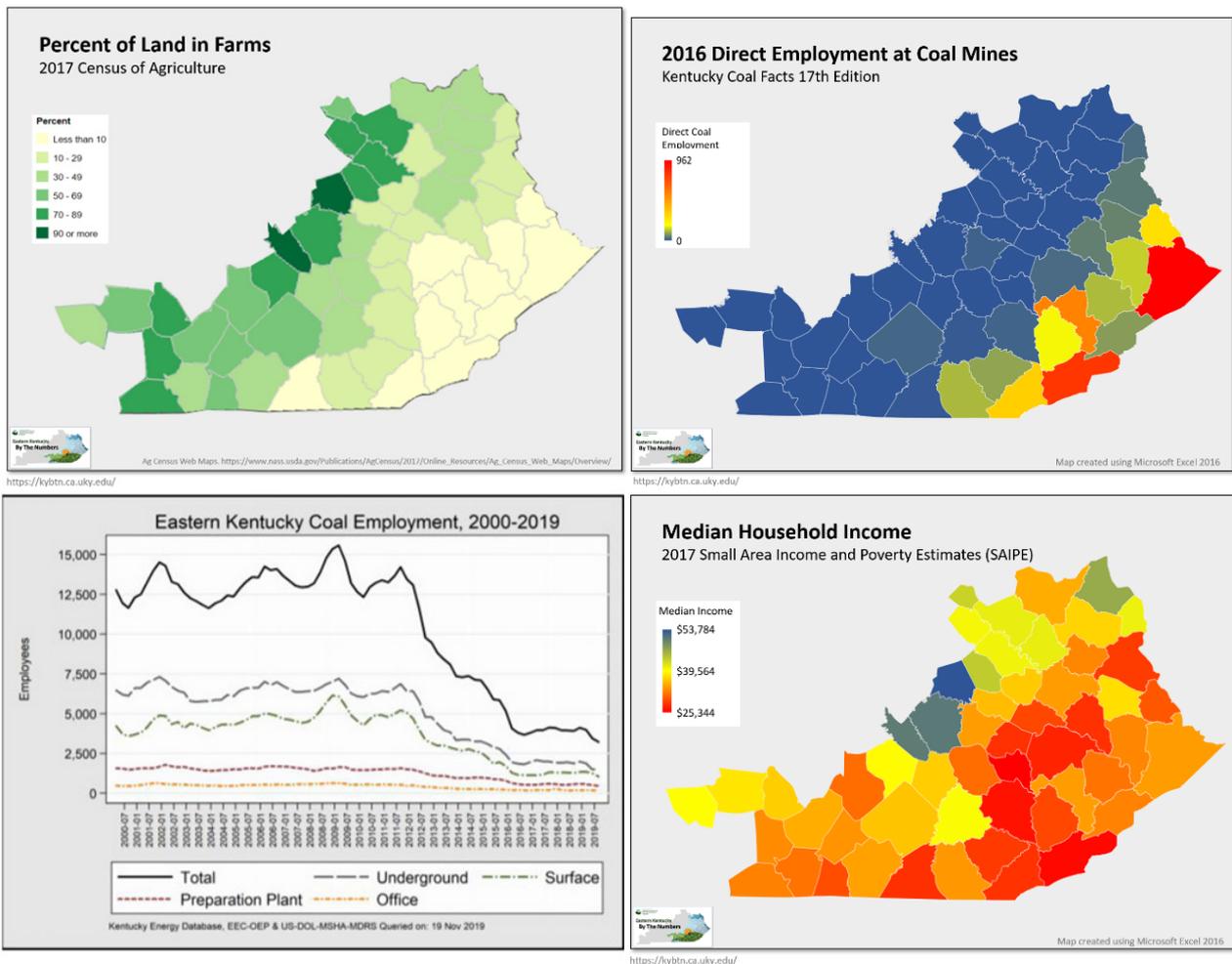


Figure 22 SOAR Region mining and agriculture distribution

SOAR was established in 2013 to address these challenges and explore opportunities. The structure of the initiative is unique in the broad local support from existing organisations, multiple levels of government, and establishment of long-term strategies focused on regional transition.



Figure 23 SOAR Strategy

The SOAR case study provides relevant points to consider for Burnett Inland.

First, SOAR brings together diverse stakeholders across multiple counties. A similar collaborative approach would be considered to align efforts across North Burnett, South Burnett, and Cherbourg.

Second, SOAR’s focus is on the economic transition for the region, with a stated mandate to “fill the economic gaps left by the decline of the coal industry”. A similar exclusive focus for a Burnett Inland collaborative approach would focus on helping the region to navigate the highlighted economic diversification challenges.

Third, SOAR is a nonpartisan not for profit supporting existing member-based organisations “rally our communities to help us achieve these goals together for the good of all”. Similarly, a proposed approach for Burnett Inland would form a collaborative backbone outside of while also engaged with existing institutions.

# 6.0 Recommendations

This report considers the regional context, current strategies, community input, applicable literature, and Australian and global case studies related to regional economies in transition.

The aim of the review is to provide a consideration for Burnett Inland and outline potential funding sources for development of long-term economic plan, a process for development of the that long-term plan, and a proposed engagement process.

## Options

Options for future strategy development can be considered under four scenarios:

**Business as usual;**

**Expand existing roles;**

**External intervention; or**

**Facilitated development of a new structure.**

These options are not exclusive but should be considered as degrees of focus for a holistic regional futures strategy.

				<b>Preferred</b>
Option	<b>Option 1 Business as usual</b>	<b>Option 2 Expand existing role</b>	<b>Option 3 External intervention</b>	<b>Option 4 New collaborative model</b>
Description	Rely on past change processes to meet current and future needs	Existing role expands services to act as collaborative body	Significant external provider outside the region or significant infrastructure investment to facilitate collective action.	<b>Collective impact approach with a backbone structure</b>
Pros	Minimal change required Known roles providing consistent services	Leverage existing leadership functions and networks Allow for single-point, top-down leadership	Bring external capability and capacity not currently available Immediate investment injection	<b>Community-led engagement and change</b> <b>Dedicated focus on long-term whole-of region transition strategy</b>
Cons	Capacity and capability may not be in current structure and roles	Lack of legitimacy, credibility, stability, and accountability in single role	Community infrastructure may not be prepared to leverage physical or financial infrastructure Impact limited by life of investment or involvement	<b>Requires broad community buy-in</b> <b>Balance between establishing change approach and structure and achieving focus and outcomes</b>

Figure 24 Burnett Inland Futures Options Summary

**Rally our  
communities to  
help us achieve  
these goals  
together for the  
good of all**

*[redearth.org.au](http://redearth.org.au)*

## 1 Option 1: Business as usual

Option One is a business-as-usual option that sees the existing roles of local government, peak bodies, business associations, and loose networks support economic diversification. This approach is the default option without any change in structure and a reliance on traditional approaches supporting a community in transition. Existing roles are presumed to maintain current structures with similar resourcing. Under a business-as-usual approach, each role would be expected to increase capability and capacity, with some instances of contraction due to staff turnover or unforeseen impacts.

A business-as-usual approach would not be expected to significantly change the Burnett Inland context. While any one role such as local government or a Chamber of Commerce may develop capacity through internal leadership or external funding, the impact would be constrained to the accountabilities of the role. It is also unlikely that all roles would expand capability in a consistent and coordinated manner to have a sustained impact on the future outcomes in the region. The current structures would not be expected to result in an aligned and shared long-term strategy across the region.

## 2 Option 2: Expand existing roles

Option Two is to expand one or more existing roles to lead transition activities across all roles. Examples include a local government creating new committees, working groups, or resourcing new departments; or economic development organisations or business associations expanding their remit.

This option has the benefit of local understanding of the challenges and leveraging existing trusted networks and relationships. However, there are also risks involved. Existing roles can introduce conflicts of interests and competing agendas in developing collaborative frameworks. Established roles can also be challenged to develop capacity and capability for regional transition in addition to existing operations.

## 3 Option 3: External intervention

Option Three is to rely on an external intervention as a catalyst in the region, such as infrastructure that acts as a competitive advantage, attraction of a major industry sector or partner, or securing long-term funding for local initiatives. The intervention would act to mobilise the local community, generate new forms of employment, and address local challenges.

While a significant infrastructure investment can seem attractive as a solution, there are many challenges with external interventions having a long-term impact on long-term community resilience. First, the intervention will not address and may exacerbate existing relationship and collaboration challenges in the region. Second, an external intervention may focus on a specific region or industry, as seen with manufacturing innovation hubs or expansion in employment in a specific sector.

### 4 Option 4: Development of a collaborative model (Recommended)

Option Four is to develop a new collaborative model in the region to enable collective impact focused on economic transition. This option requires engagement and participation across all roles in the region to be effective.

While this option is recommended, it is dependent on acceptance and commitment by existing roles across the community. The emphasis of the approach is not on setting up a new organisation but on bringing together established groups in an invitational and participatory approach for a different way of thinking and acting in the region.

## Implementation

The implementation of the approach will build upon the existing collaborative model to involve engagement and collaboration across industry sectors and levels and roles in the community.

The approach will consider the findings with community stakeholders against overarching principles, including:

#### **We focus on what can only be achieved together rather than what can be achieved on our own**

The challenges identified in the analysis of interviews, roles in the ecosystem, and review of the strategic plans are complex, and more than any single institution can solve. If there is a challenge that is more readily addressed by a single organisation, then a collaborative approach is not needed.

#### **"With", not "To" or "For" local communities**

Inflicting collaborative models on the community will not result in a collaborative outcome. The approach needs facilitative leadership, developed with in in the community.

#### **Coordinated co-design of focus areas**

The focus areas for a collaborative model will be defined by the community needs and shared vision and opportunities.

#### **Acknowledge, respect, and align with existing wisdom and momentum**

The approach will respect the significant of collaborative work in the region and surrounding communities, while acknowledging the need for new approaches to address the complex challenges.

#### **Inclusive of diverse voices at the table**

The approach will consider and include the diverse communities represented in the region as part of the long-term development.

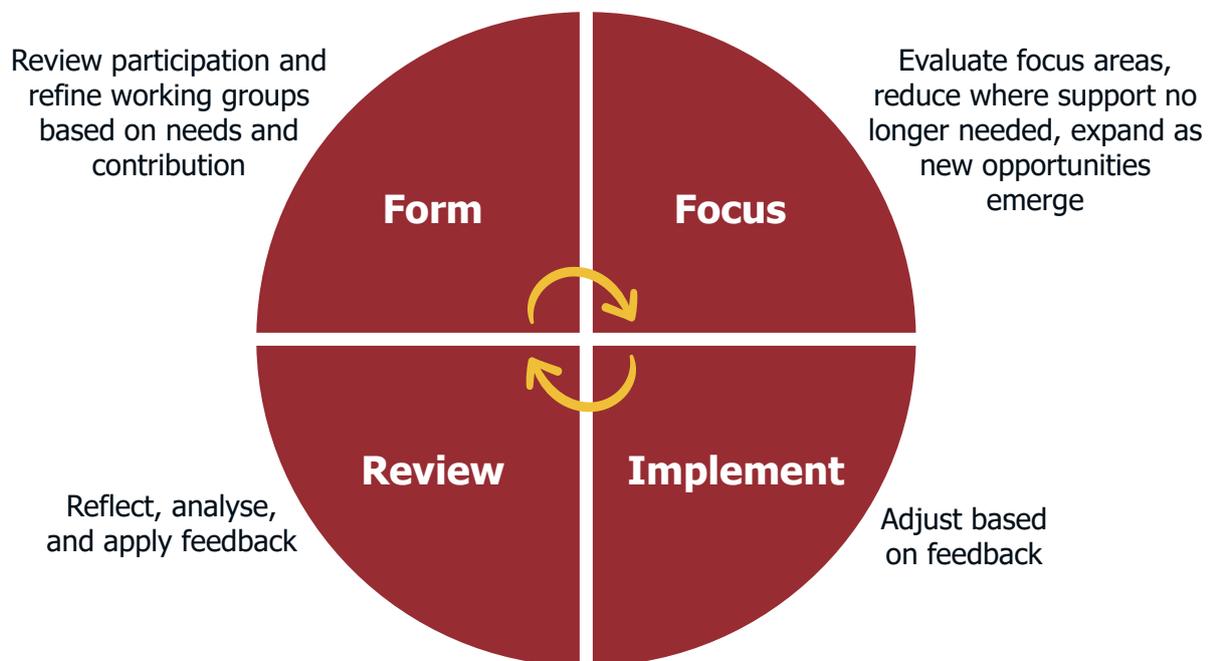
**The approach takes a long-term perspective on regional development, with an emphasis on action and iterative outcomes.**

# Implementation

Stage	Duration	Timeframe												Activity	Desired outcome	
		J	F	M	A	P	J	J	A	S	O	N	D			
<b>Introduction</b>	2 to 4 months														Review findings of the report with key stakeholders one-on-one and in facilitated group settings	Engaged partners identified. Community awareness and support.
<b>Forming</b>	1 to 2 months														Initial 1 to 3 meetings of the backbone	Formation of the initial backbone structure. Terms of reference drafted.
<b>Focus</b>	1 to 4 months														Desktop analysis and community engagement. Idea testing and validation	Identification of key focus areas. Develop shared measurement practices and metrics
<b>Implementation</b>	Ongoing														Regular backbone and working group meetings. Program / project execution and reporting.	Formation of one or more working groups around focus area(s). Implement measurement framework. Project or program execution.
<b>Review and apply</b>	2 to 3 months														Review, feedback, and refinement.	Annual and regular reporting

Figure 25 Implementation plan schedule

**The iterative cycle will continue as the backbone structure becomes more established. It is proposed that the approach be supported for an initial five years, with each year informed by the progress and outcomes.**



# Burnett Inland Futures

November 2021

## Engagement Framework



Developed by Melinda Jones



## Purpose of the framework

The Stakeholder engagement framework (the Framework) provides guidance on best practice engagement. It aims to set standards for effective stakeholder and community engagement, to assist in building relationships, to enhance reputation, and to demonstrate accountability in decision-making.

The Framework will help Red Earth Community Foundation (Red Earth) to coordinate the stakeholder engagement activities of Burnett Inland Futures (BIF) stakeholders responsible for implementation and delivery of the BIF work.

This Framework formalises a commitment to engage stakeholders early in project development, to provide adequate time for consultation as part of a transparent and well-planned decision-making process, and to inform stakeholders about how their views have been considered.

This includes:

- defining the processes for managing community and stakeholder engagement.
- providing tools, templates and guidelines for best practice.
- ensuring internal and external engagement forms an integral component of the project development and delivery process.
- a commitment to continuous improvement.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Framework are:

- to establish stakeholder and community engagement as a core part of how decisions are made.
- to ensure consistent and appropriate consultation and engagement processes for the Burnett Inland.
- to facilitate and promote the use of appropriate and consistent engagement tools.

## Stakeholder engagement

Effective stakeholder engagement provides a means to incorporate stakeholder values, interests, needs and desires into decisions that affect their lives. It can also assist with problem definition, identification of opportunities and risk management. The earlier stakeholders are engaged the more likely these benefits are realised.

Effective stakeholder engagement leads to more open and honest information sharing, better understanding of perspectives and needs. As such, it enhances our ability to present more comprehensive and considered advice to government and the community, to negotiate outcomes of broad benefit and gain commitment that may be crucial to the success of a project.

Effective stakeholder and community engagement can result in the following benefits:

- reducing future costs, for example, time saved later in managing issues that could have been avoided.
- improved access to and understanding of emerging issues and the capacity to handle them before they develop.
- developing a culture of innovation and learning, for example by building the knowledge into our decisions and practices.
- simplifying conflict resolution through a build-up of trust, and a clearer articulation of what cannot be resolved.
- improved stakeholder cooperation with activities such as construction.

## Who are our stakeholders?

Stakeholders are classified as anyone who may influence, be affected, or impacted by, or have an interest in the actions, outcomes, and goals of BIF.

Some of the categories of stakeholders engaged will include:

- Local, State & Federal Government
- Chamber of Commerce and Development Associations
- Interest and community groups
- Businesses
- Irrigators groups
- Economic Development groups
- Research bodies
- Natural capital groups
- Innovation and Entrepreneur support
- Property owners and residents
- Non-government organisations
- Media
- Industry groups
- Peak bodies

## Building relationships

A strategic objective of stakeholder engagement is to build relationships.

Relationships are built on underlying values, such as integrity (honesty, trust, transparency, 'no surprises'); respect (respecting and incorporating feedback into decisions); excellence (professionalism, planning) and teamwork (working together towards mutually understood objectives).

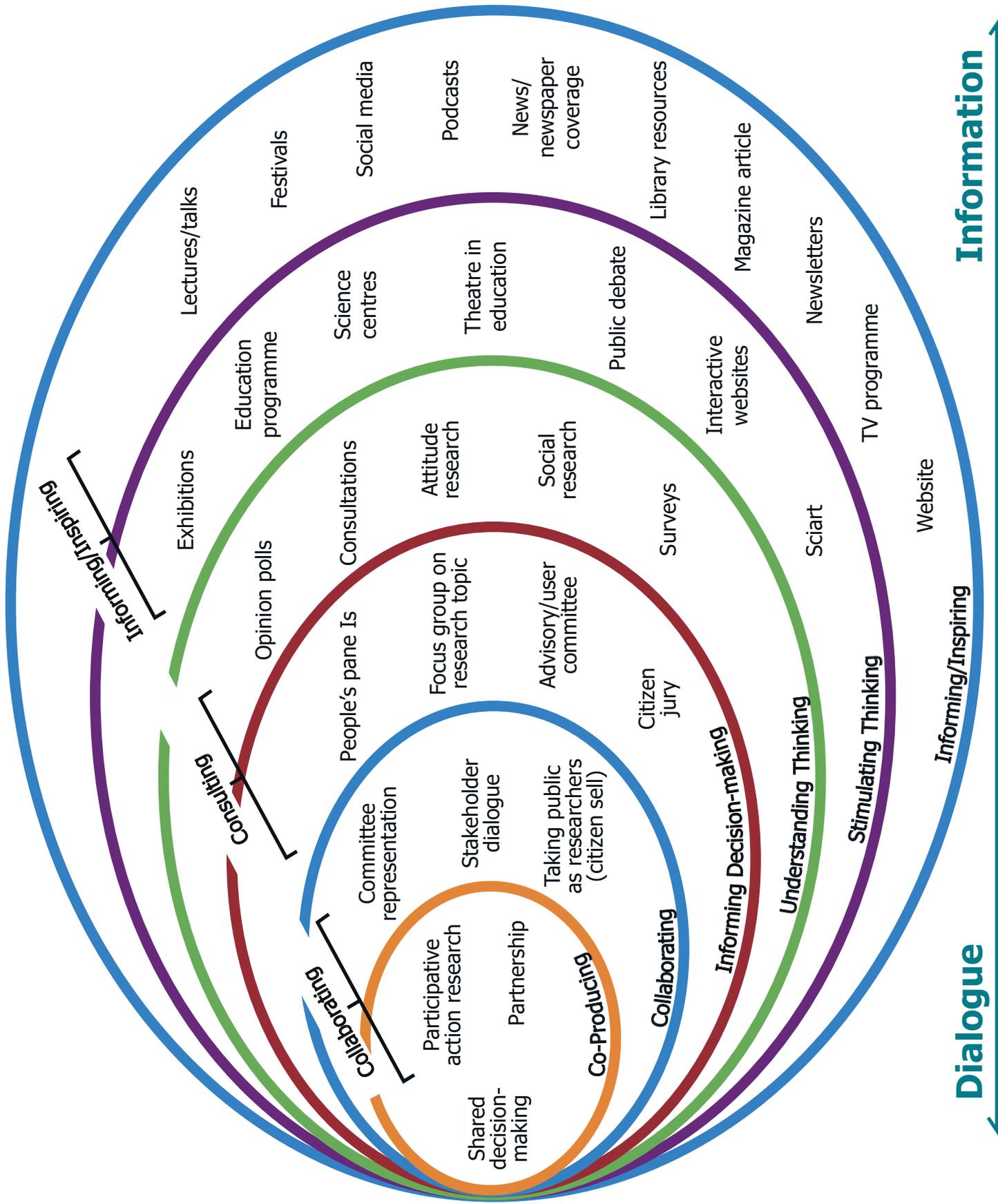
Successful projects and initiatives require a consensus of stakeholder support for proposed solutions. This can be gained through an understanding of, or involvement in, a decision-making process.

When negative impacts on stakeholder groups or individuals are unavoidable, we will act with understanding, empathy and honesty and provide as much time as we can for the stakeholder to accept and plan for the future.

The strategic benefit of relationships is to improve trust and enhance the good reputation of BIF for undertaking future activities and build support for a collaborative model/approach to the 20, 30, 50 year journey ahead.

**Relationships are built on underlying values, such as integrity, respect, excellence and teamwork.**

Please turn this page to view



# Stakeholder involvement

The spectrum of public participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) is adopted for BIF and regarded as the best guide to understanding and choosing an appropriate level of engagement. In line with BIF principles, it is important that stakeholders and communities are clear on their level of engagement and why that level was chosen. The stakeholder engagement level and method need to be planned for on a project-by-project basis.

The five levels of engagement outlined on the IAP2 spectrum shown below will be utilised in every instance to meet the commitment to the community:



## Inform

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.



## Consult

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.



## Involve

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.



## Collaborate

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.



## Empower

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

The levels of community engagement will be identified on the IAP2 spectrum at the project planning stage following an analysis of the desired outcomes (see Appendix A). The community engagement plan will identify the most appropriate communication tool and timeframes to ensure the particular target group(s) are well informed of both the issue and the engagement opportunities.

## Types of engagement

Engagement may include multiple levels of public participation, both at different stages of the process and because different stakeholders will choose to engage at different levels.

The type or form of engagement practices undertaken can be broadly described as either deliberative or participatory.

### Deliberative engagement

Deliberative practices take place at the highest three levels of influence on the IAP2 spectrum, 'Involve', 'Collaborate' or 'Empower'.

Deliberative engagement allows for discussion and the possibility of consensus if needed. The key features of a deliberative process are to come to a decision after considering all information and prioritising and weighing solutions. By its very name, it requires a level of engagement that is measured, considered and has the involvement of others.

Deliberation can be scaled to fit the size and impact of the project. Some projects may require skilled facilitators to ensure a fair and equitable process.

Examples of deliberative practices are:

- working with advisory groups or established networks.
- online proposals and ideas are discussed by a panel of industry/peak bodies or community members.
- participants are asked to consider and prioritise ideas.
- a representative group participates in a series of sessions of information exchange in order to reach consensus.

Projects most suited to a deliberative approach include those where the outcome will have a far-reaching or long-term effect, and issues where there is considerable community concern or division about the alternatives.

### Participatory engagement

Participatory practices take place at the first two levels of influence on the spectrum, 'Inform' and 'Consult' and involve one-way information exchange either from Red Earth to community or community to Red Earth.

Participatory engagement typically occurs when feedback is invited on ideas, alternatives or draft documents.

Examples of participatory practices are

- Surveys
- Polls, ideas gathering
- Submissions

Participation at this level can be very broad, including by stakeholders who choose to track the project but offer no direct input.

# Engagement planning, implementation and evaluation

To ensure effective engagement, implements the following eight steps to design, deliver and complete community engagement.

## **1. Clearly define the purpose and scope of the engagement:**

- 1.1. Document the project purpose, scope, engagement objectives, timelines, budget and the decision to be made. Identify any risks.
- 1.2. Take into account relevant legislation in framing the engagement.
- 1.3. Determine initial expectation of the level of participation on the IAP2 spectrum.

## **2. Understand stakeholder and industry/community interests:**

- 2.1. Identify the stakeholders who are affected by, interested in, or who can influence or inform the decision.
- 2.2. Understand how stakeholders are affected, the nature and intensity of their interest, and capacity and willingness to participate.
- 2.3. Consider if there are barriers to participation that need to be removed to ensure an appropriate balance of views.
- 2.4. Identify the preferred methods for engagement.
- 2.5. Ensure that participants understand their role and level of influence on the decision-making process.

## **3. Design an appropriate engagement process:**

- 3.1. Identify the stages of the engagement process and any negotiable or non-negotiable aspects.
- 3.2. Plan inclusive and accessible communications and methods to support the engagement.
- 3.3. Identify data requirements that are relevant and measurable, and how it will be analysed.
- 3.4. Plan how the data collected will be managed and ensure compliance with human rights charter and privacy requirements.
- 3.5. Identify the skills and resources needed to ensure an effective engagement.
- 3.6. Document the approach and obtain authorisation.

## **4. Deliver genuine and respectful engagement:**

- 4.1. Ensure all activities are inclusive and accessible.
- 4.2. Be clear about the purpose and level of engagement.

## **5. Review and interpret the engagement data:**

- 5.1. Collate and review the data from each engagement activity.
- 5.2. Identify any limitations to the appropriate balance of information
- 5.3. Analyse the data to identify themes, priorities and preferences.

## **6. Apply the outcomes of the engagement to inform the decision-making process:**

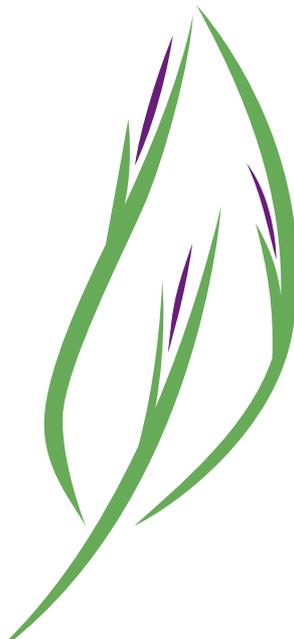
- 6.1. Prepare a report for applying the outcomes of the engagement to inform the decision.
- 6.2. Where appropriate, provide further opportunity for input, for example to comment on a draft document.

## **7. Evaluate the engagement process for improvement:**

- 7.1. Assess whether engagement objectives were achieved.
- 7.2. Document and apply the lessons.

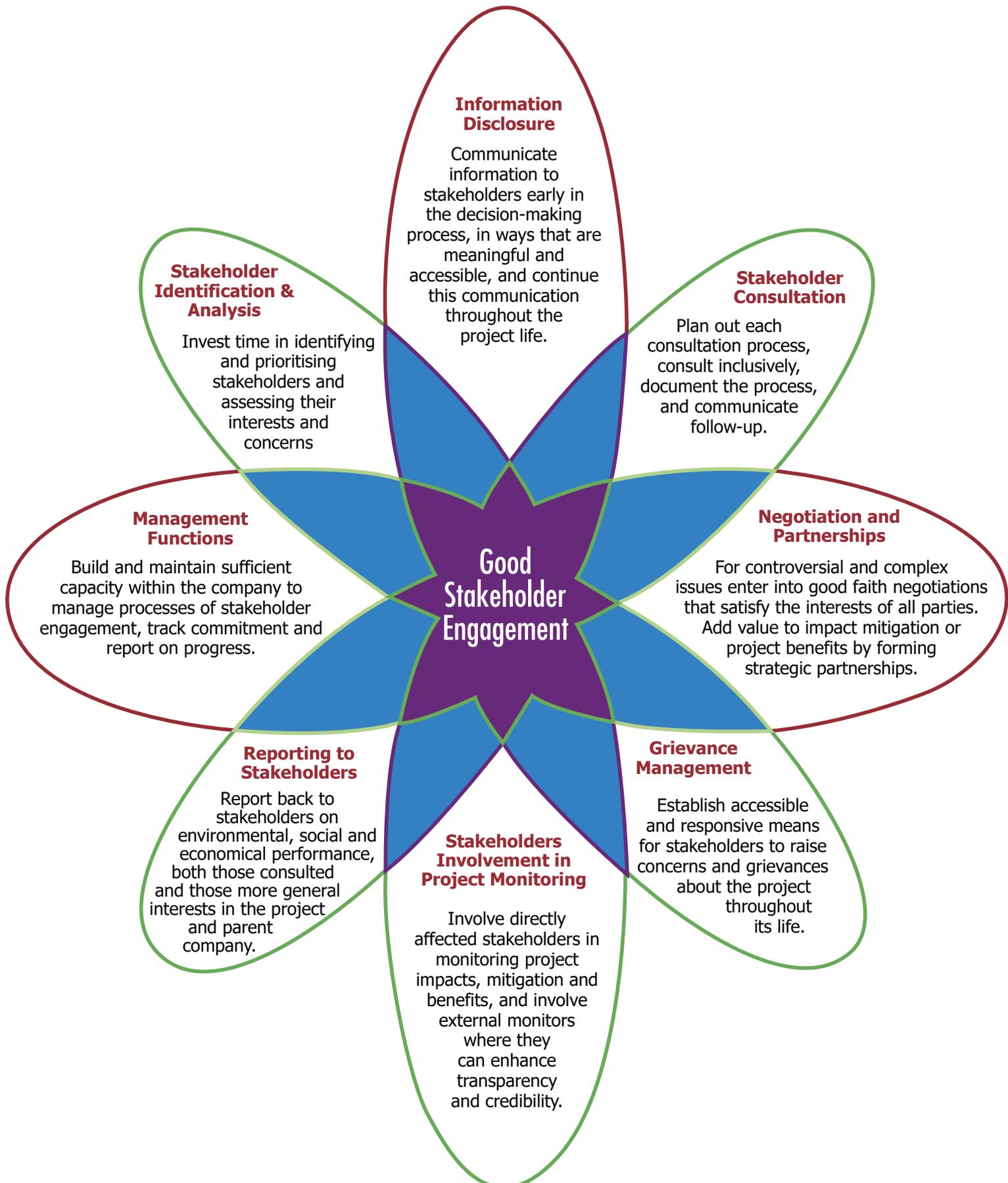
## **8. Close the loop on the engagement:**

- 8.1. Where possible, report feedback back to participants to ensure correct understanding.
- 8.2. Acknowledge participants' contributions to the engagement process.
- 8.3. Share the outcomes of the engagement with the community including how it contributed to the decision.
- 8.4. Communicate the next steps of the project.
- 8.5. Publish updates on the project on all online mediums such as website and other channels.



# Informing of outcomes

Reporting of outcomes and updates will always be available online through Red Earths engagement platform, as well as provided directly to those who asked to be kept informed and have provided contact details.



Some of the tools and techniques that can be used to involve stakeholders are:



## Inform

Media releases, mail outs, fact sheets, displays and exhibitions, presentations, phone messages, website, podcasts and social media notice board information, videos, open house and flyers.



## Consult

Focus groups, survey's, public comment, feedback and complaints, interviews, comments cards, story-telling, public meetings, forums and suggestion boxes.

### Social media

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide a platform for the community to be informed about updates and to share views on a particular project, campaign or process. It's also a place for the community to raise issues and concerns if managed appropriately.

### Survey

A survey may be used to ask participates information to help understand community opinion on a matter. A survey may be by telephone, door-knocking, or online. There are two approaches to surveying that may be used, one would typically be to a random sample of residents which would reflect the general population's views or to a targeted group where understanding might be needed with diversity of views and/or the majority preference on options.

### Have Your Say

The Red Earth website will have a 'Have Your Say page that provides information on BIF to seek involvement. The information is available to all interested community members although registration may be required for some online activities.



## Involve

Forums for debate, discussion panels, public comments, focus groups, workshops and public meetings.

### Listening posts

Where numerous locations are selected to provide space for community ideas and issues. This may also be an opportunity to check how things are in the region, get their opinions on something or to hear their thoughts on implementing a plan.

### Kitchen Table Conversations

Where we have a chance to 'meet people' where they are at – at community events and groups or at functions, listening to community members' vision for the region and their concerns.



## Involve continued...

### Information sessions

Sessions held to build understanding and knowledge of a topic, such as BIF, or to advise on or familiarise the community with the outcome of a decision. Participants may have the opportunity to ask questions or share feedback.

### Online community panel

Anyone with a connection to the BIF can register to join the online community panel. This allows the use of random survey methods or to ask participate on issues that are important to them.

### Workshops

During these events, participants have a hands-on role in identifying and developing solutions. There is usually a level of consensus sought in workshops. Because specialist skills in deliberative and democratic techniques are often needed, they may be facilitated by expert consultants.



## Collaborate

Advisory committees, networks, working group agreements, Expert patients, Delphi process, retreats, round tables, impact assessments participatory decision making, consensus building and ethics committees.

### Committees and existing networks

Committees and community networks have experience or special knowledge on particular topics and are well-placed to provide recommendations on projects that would benefit from their expertise.



## Empower

Consumer managed project/service, citizens panel, community driven planning, consensus conference, deliberative polling, study circles, sustainable community development and focus groups.

### Citizen jury

This is a formal process where a jury or panel is formed from the community to spend time hearing all aspects of an important issue in order to provide recommendations in regard to the project.

# Engagement definitions

For the purposes of this paper the following definitions are:

## Community

Refers to the people who have a stake and interest in the Burnett Inland and includes people who:

- Live, work, study or conduct business or are involved in local community groups or organisations in the regions
- Visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located within the regions

## Engagement

Engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with individuals and groups to encourage active involvement in decisions that affect them or are of interest to them.

## Consultation

The activity of seeking input on a matter.

## Deliberation

Deliberation is an approach to decision-making in which citizens consider relevant facts from multiple points of view, converse with one another to think critically about options before them and enlarge their perspectives, opinions, and understandings.

## Process

A relationship between key steps, activities, tasks, policies and / or resources.

## Public participation

A term used by IAP2 meaning the involvement of those affected (interested or impacted) by a decision in the decision-making process. We use the term interchangeably with Community Engagement, Stakeholder Engagement or Consultation.

## Stakeholder

An individual or group with a strong interest in the decisions of the Burnett Inland and are directly impacted by the outcomes

# Burnett Inland Futures Engagement

Focus will be on:

- Peer review regional strategies status assessment, impact, and alignment.
- The Burnett Inland priorities for the next 10, 20 & 50 years.

Engagement	Activities	Level of involvement
<b>Inform</b>	Media releases, fact sheets, presentations, website and social media, notice board information and flyers.	To be determined by stakeholders
<b>Consult</b>	<p>Surveys (online and hard copy), public comment, feedback, peer review, story-telling, Red Earth alumni outreach and forums.</p> <p>Survey: A survey will be conducted to peer review regional strategies status assessment, impact and alignment.</p> <p>A survey will be conducted to identify the Burnett Inland priorities for the next 10, 20 &amp; 50 years.</p> <p>Have Your Say: The Red Earth website will have a 'Have Your Say' page that provides information on BIF to seek involvement. The information is available to all interested community members although registration may be required for some online activities.</p>	To be determined by stakeholders
<b>Involve</b>	<p>Utilisation and upskilling of the Red Earth Community Foundation Leadership Alumni – the backbone of the Burnett Inland region that is intertwined within the ecosystem.</p> <p>Red Earth Alumni to determine their level of engagement skills and lead involve processes such as: discussion panels, table conversations, focus groups, workshops, public meetings, listening posts, information sessions, kitchen table conversations, online community panel, formal engagement with stakeholders and identified community and environment groups via briefings and one-on-one meetings.</p>	To be determined by stakeholders
<b>Collaborate</b>	<p>Utilisation and upskilling of the Red Earth Community Foundation Leadership Alumni – the backbone of the Burnett Inland region that is intertwined within the ecosystem.</p> <p>Red Earth Alumni to determine their level of engagement skills and lead involve processes such as: partnering with existing committees, industry leaders and networks, as well as, establishing advisory committees, utilising networks, working group agreements, round tables, participatory decision making, consensus building. and ethics committees.</p>	To be determined by stakeholders
<b>Empower</b>	<p>Utilisation and upskilling of the Red Earth Community Foundation Leadership Alumni – the backbone of the Burnett Inland region that is intertwined within the ecosystem.</p> <p>Red Earth Alumni to determine their level of engagement skills and lead involve processes such as: citizens panel, community driven planning, deliberative polling, sustainable community development and focus groups.</p>	To be determined by stakeholders

Note: Engagement activities will be funded through Building Better Regions Funding initiative.

## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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# Appendix A

## BIF Stakeholder Engagement Plan Template

<b>Target audience</b> Who do you want to inform?	<b>Key messages for this audience</b> What do you want to tell them?	<b>Communication methods</b> How are you going to tell them?	<b>Who is responsible for doing it?</b>	<b>Deadline</b> By when it needs to happen?	<b>Date completed</b>
Example Project team – kick off meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the team and project</li> <li>• Agreed ways of working</li> <li>• Review project objectives and management approach e.g. schedule / deliverables/ communication</li> </ul>	Face to face	Project Lead Project Sponsor	Once	

### Engagement Communication Matrix template

Stakeholder	Title/role	Communication type	Communication channel	Frequency of communication	Stakeholder goal	Stakeholder project interest rating (1-10)	Code	Contact details	Note

**Authoritative level Code:**

- (U) Unaware — Not aware of the project or its impact
- (R) Resistant — Aware of the project but resistant to change
- (N) Neutral — Aware of the project, but neither supportive nor resistant
- (S) Supportive — Aware and supportive of the project
- (L) Leading — Aware of and actively engaged in ensuring the success of the project

# Definitions

## Accelerator programs

A short-term (1 to 6 months) structured programs to support the rapid growth of an entrepreneur firm. The program has a start and end date and has potential for funding.

## Actor

An actor is a specific organisation or individual that fills one or more roles and performs functions in the system.

## Chamber of commerce

Provide advocacy for local business, events and networking, and dedicated mentoring programs. The focus varies significantly by region and various models exist. Some are funded by local government, others rely solely on member fees to maintain independence for advocacy. Chambers have the potential to provide access to networks and customers for early validation and have a vested interest in supporting local businesses of all forms.

## Community

Community is defined as “the local unity of a group of human beings who live their social economic, and cultural lives together and jointly recognize and accept certain obligations and hold certain standards of value in common” (Porter & Cantarero, 2014, p. 1094; Murgaš & Klobučník, 2017).

## Community resilience

Community resilience is “the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise” (Hightree et al. 2018).

## Coworking space

A coworking space is a physical location that offers short-term and flexible desk space for hire.

## Ecosystem – innovation, entrepreneur, startup, knowledge, technology

The ecosystem describes the inherent complexity and motion within a system, as defined by the original author as a “constant interchange of the most various kinds within each system.” (Tansley, 1935, p. 299; Willis, 1997). The focus and boundaries of the ecosystem are defined by the preceding word: innovation ecosystem, entrepreneur ecosystem, startup ecosystem. For example, innovation ecosystem is described as “the complex relationships that are formed between actors or entities whose functional goal is to enable technology development and innovation” (Oh et al. 2016). The functional goal of the entrepreneur ecosystem is to support entrepreneur’s and the goal of a startup ecosystem is to enable startup companies. Unless explicitly stated, the term ecosystem is used in this report as a general reference to innovation ecosystems.

## Entrepreneur

An entrepreneur is “a person who begins a business, taking upon themselves a financial risk with the hope of a profit.” (Oxford, 2019; Innovation and Science Australia, 2016). Key characteristics in this definition include personal initiation, ownership, control, risk, and potential for personal gain (Gartner & Shane, 1995).

# Definitions cont...

## Function

A function is a grouping of activities to achieve outcomes in the system.

## High growth firm

The parameters of what constitutes a high growth firm can vary, but in general includes: "All enterprises with average annualized growth greater than twenty per cent per annum, over a three-year period. Growth is thus measured by the number of employees or by turnover." (Eurostat / OECD, 2007, p. 61).

## Hub and spoke

A model of geographic delivery where services are provided from a central location, often with greater density of resources, into one or more 'spoke' locations.

## Innovation

While innovation definitions vary, innovation can be seen broadly as involving transformative steps to create new or improved products or services that add or create value (Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook, 2009). The more detailed definition by the OECD is as follows: "An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations." (OECD, 2018, p. 20).

## Innovation hub

An innovation hub is a form of business incubation and a type of organisational sponsorship. An innovation hub is physical or virtual space with dedicated resources (programs, mentors, capital) to support entrepreneurs. Innovation hubs go beyond the traditional coworking model through dedicated resources to provide access to connections and networks, a space and community of like-minded individuals, and skills development all related to entrepreneurial activity (Gathege & Moraa, 2013). This definition can be expanded to include hubs not simply as physical spaces, but "'human spaces' which facilitate collaboration between individuals and organisations" (Kovács & Zoltán, 2017). The emphasis on the human element allows for an expanded inclusion of virtual or online hubs, "pop-up" locations such as a pub or library activated by a local group or program, and individual leaders who bring people together in a community to support individual projects and businesses entrepreneurship and innovation (Schopfel, Roche & Hubert, 2015; Cabras, & Mount, 2016).

## Innovation system / National innovation system

The innovation system is the system (roles, actors, network, functions) that facilitates the innovation process. This occurs within various geographic, technical, and social boundaries (OECD, 2018). The boundary of the system includes "all important economic, social, political, organizational, institutional, and other factors that influence the development, diffusion, and use of innovations" (Edquist, 1997). The technical definition applied to the national innovation system level is "The network of institutions in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify and diffuse new technologies." (Freeman, 1987; OECD, 1997, p. 10).

## Intrapreneur

Individuals employed in organisations who take on entrepreneurial activities potentially involving personal risk and reward on behalf of their employers.

# Definitions cont...

## Node

In a system, a node is a point in a network. The Australian Future Drought Fund Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub program refers to nodes as locations for hub activity.

## Region / Regional

"A region is typically defined as an area that contains a cohesive network of trade and commerce; local commuting for jobs and shopping; common access to services; and association of community activities" (NSW Government, 2017, p. 11). The concept of region for this report borrows on the definition of functional economic regions (FER). The Australian Productivity report considering that identity and function play a role in defining regions, in that:

- people often travel between areas for work or to access services;
- businesses hire workers, purchase services, and sell products and services across areas; and
- governments and people interact economically, socially and culturally across areas.

FERs benefit as they "facilitate better evaluation and implementation of regional strategic plans and development policies." (Productivity Commission, 2017, p. 5). The term "regional" is used to consider areas outside of what would be considered a capital city's functional area.

## Role

A role is a set of norms, behaviours, and attitudes organised around one or more functions (Biddle, 1986).

## Startup

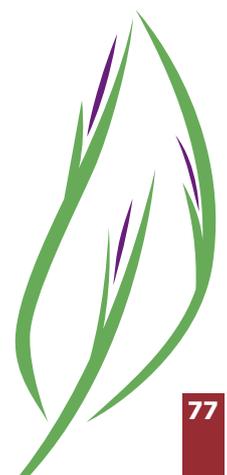
As outlined by Australian advocacy body StartupAus, "There is no current centralised definition of a 'startup' in Australia. Competing definitions exist across existing programs, requiring startups to requalify for each scheme. As startup-focused programs proliferate, this regulatory burden is likely to increase." (StartupAus, 2018, p. 17). The lack of clear definition is experienced in the general business community, with many considering any company starting out to be a "startup". The definition utilised in by StartupAus is used for this report: "A young high-growth company that is using technology and innovation to tackle a large, probably global, market, with two defining characters: Potential for high growth and disruptive innovation." (StartupAus, 2019).

## System

The system is defined by actors and the network created by the actor's interactions as they perform functions within defined boundaries (Williams & Imam, 2006). A system "consists of elements discernible within the total reality (universe), defined by the aims of the investigator. All these elements have at least one relationship with another element within the system and may have relationships with other elements within total reality." (Deckers, 2017, p. 16).

## Third space

A space for engagement of community distinct from work or home.



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**There is no power  
for change greater  
than a community  
discovering what it  
cares about.**

***Margaret J.  
Wheatley***



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